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# Everlasting Struggles to Articulate the Arctic

*Discourse Analysis of Finnish, Russian, and Singaporean*

*Governmental Speeches in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*

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ITO FUTA: Everlasting Struggles to Articulate the Arctic: *Discourse Analysis of Finnish, Russian, and Singaporean Governmental Speeches in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*  
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The Arctic has attracted global attention as never before in recent years, which makes it vital to study this region from as many different angles as possible.

This thesis attempts to deconstruct Arctic discourses and Arcticness of Finland, Russia, and Singapore by applying poststructuralist discourse theory and analysis informed by Laclau and Mouffe. More precisely, it aims to identify the process of how the three states have written the space and filled the empty signifier called 'Arctic' to become primary subjects therein. They are selected as the empirical cases because of their unique history concerning the region, and also because of their representation of three distinctive subject positions in the today's Arctic discourse: the Arctic coastal, non-coastal, and non-Arctic states. Thus, comparing and contrasting them in detail would be highly interesting and valuable, which has rarely been done in the field of IR before.

As research data, a total of 74 'texts' have been gathered from the official websites of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the President's Office of the respective countries. They consist mostly of political speeches by political leaders at globally acknowledged premises such as the Arctic Council, the Arctic Circle, and the Arctic Frontiers, to name a few. The texts have been denaturalized with the help of a theoretically-informed and tailor-made checklist for the study.

The research conducted reveals that Finland, Russia, and Singapore have articulated the three certainly distinctive Arctics and Arcticness in such ways as to suit to their specific needs and identities. However, this is not to deny that they also have several key aspects in common, and both the hegemonic and counter discourses have equally impacted on them. A critical gaze and knowledge offered by this study can help the general public, scholars, and policymakers to think outside the box and to reconstruct different Arctics if necessary in their minds.

Keywords:

Arctic, Identity, Poststructuralist discourse theory and analysis, Finland, Russia, Singapore

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## List of Abbreviations

A3	Arctic non-coastal states (Finland, Iceland, and Sweden)
A5	Arctic coastal states (Canada, Denmark, Norway, Russia, and the U.S.A.)
A8	Arctic states (A3 + A5)
AC	Arctic Council
AEPS	Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
DA	Discourse Analysis
DT	Discourse Theory
EU	European Union
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. Why Arctic?

*“The fate of the Arctic is tied to the fate of Miami, Mumbai, Shanghai and coastal cities across the world -- and so much else of course. When the Arctic suffers, the world feels the pain” (Ban Ki-moon, 2016)*

This quote was taken from a keynote speech by Ban Ki-moon, the former Secretary-General of the United Nations (UN), at the 4<sup>th</sup> Arctic Circle held in October 2016. Astonishingly, over 2000 participants which included not only researchers, but also policy-makers, NGOs, and others from more than 45 countries participated in the event and discussed a variety of matters in relation to the Arctic. Nonetheless, this is far from the only example which signifies ever-growing global interests towards this region. For example, Singapore which lies just 137km north of the equator and the other 11 non-Arctic countries have today observer status of the Arctic Council (AC). The AC is an intergovernmental forum which was established in 1996 and has been and continues to be at the center of Arctic governance. In addition to all of the ‘so-called’ Arctic states, hereinafter referred to as A8, (Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, and the U.S.A.), several non-Arctic states such as Italy, Japan, South Korea, and the U.K. have already published policy or strategic papers regarding the Arctic. Nicola Sturgeon (in Bennett, 2016a), First Minister of Scotland, said that “Scotland’s ties with Iceland are mirrored in our connections to many Arctic states today: Ancestral ties to Canada, and trading ties to Korea and Japan”. This is just another manifestation of how globalized the Arctic *is becoming*.

Many countries and politicians who represent them right across the globe are thinking and talking about the Arctic although most of them have never visited there. Where? The Arctic, as I wrongly said. The above statement probably needs to be re-considered because there seems

to be no clearly delimited ‘Arctic’. Rather, I argue that its definition and subsequently what it really is have been politically contested and debated. Finnish politicians (e.g. Soini, 2016a) are claiming proudly that “[n]early one third of all the people in the world living north of the 60<sup>th</sup> parallel are Finns”. If one believes in the words of the Finnish government, it can be happily stated that this thesis has also been written in the very Arctic.

To the contrary, if one equates the Arctic only with the Arctic Ocean, he/she may support the following Ilulissat Declaration made by the five Arctic coastal states (A5, which is the A8 minus Finland, Iceland, and Sweden) in 2008. “By virtue of their sovereignty, sovereign rights and jurisdiction in large areas of the Arctic Ocean *the five coastal states are in a unique position* to address these possibilities and challenges” (A5, 2008, emphasis by the author). With this definition in mind, Finland and many others would be kicked out from the Arctic game. However, more southern countries are not just quietly sitting and listening to the A5/A8 neither. An illustrating example is China which has been striving to position itself as a ‘near Arctic state’ by underlining that “China is separated from Arctic by only one country, Russia. The most northern part of China is *around 50 degree of north latitude. As a country located in north hemisphere*, China is seriously affected by climate and weather in Arctic” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, 2010, emphasis by the author). I argue that the mere facts that some countries would like to be regarded as ‘near’ to the Arctic and that such a new subject position has emerged are themselves significant and deserve much stronger attention. That there does not exist any single, but *many Arctics* is one of core assumptions of this thesis.

Why do so many countries care about the Arctic in the first place? Why were they eager to publish their Arctic strategies suddenly one after another recently? A number of reasons might be guessed with the help of classical IR theories. Firstly, the melting Arctic is believed to be a

promising place in terms of economic and military opportunities, for example new shipping routes between Asia and Europe, fishing, and natural resources such as oil and gas. Soon after the U.S. Geological Survey (2008, p. 4) estimated that the Arctic contains about 90 billion barrels of the world's undiscovered conventional oil and 1,669 trillion cubic feet of its undiscovered conventional natural gas, the world has started to narrate the region by such phrases like 'scramble for resources' and 'fierce competition in the last frontier'. Scott G. Borgerson (2008, pp. 71-74), against the background of Russia's flag-planting around the seabed of the North Pole in 2007, enthusiastically proclaimed that a great conflict, if not the WWIII, was likely to occur in the Arctic because there was no international treaty and order to regulate aggressive states in the area. For Borgerson (*idem*, pp. 73-74) and other neo-realist thinkers, the Arctic is an anarchic place where states "unilaterally grab as much territory as possible ... [by] pursuing their narrowly defined national interests". However, against these expectations, the Arctic has been or, more aptly to say, been characterized as an 'exceptionally peaceful region' (Käpylä and Mikkola, 2015, pp. 6-10) in which even a small state Norway and a great power Russia managed to solve a territorial dispute in the Barents Sea which lasted more than 40 years. Neo-realists also seem to have missed a point that the A5/A8 are the ones themselves who wanted to represent and construct the Arctic as such.

Secondly, the melting Arctic whose temperature is rising twice as fast as in other parts of the world is believed to pose extraordinary challenges to entire human beings, as Ki-moon (2016) said. It could cause many environmental destructions such as sea level rise and more frequent and extreme weather patterns locally and globally. These concerns consequently have pushed countries to cooperate in and around the Arctic since the benefit of doing so (protecting environment) outweighs the cost of unilaterally behaving for the sake of their own national interests. As a result, international forums, institutions, and common legal norms such as the AC, the Arctic Coast Guard Forum, and the Polar Code, which entered into force in January

2017, have emerged. Liberals (Timofeev, 2014, pp.7-8) contend that, in the end, states are rational and reasonable actors which can transform an anarchical space into an orderly one. Although agreeing with this to some extent, it still does not fully explain the following questions introduced above. Why did Russia decide to go all the way to the North Pole to plant its national flag? Why do some southern states want to be seen as near, if not complete, Arctic states? These questions then let me to a question which eventually motivated me to write this thesis: *Essentially, what is the Arctic and Arctic states?*

## 1.2. Writing of the Arctic Space

Some previous researches from the school of discourse theory (DT) and critical geopolitics already provide a solid basis to tackle the above question. As Gearóid Ó Tuathail and John Agnew argue:

Geopolitics, we wish to suggest, should be critically re-conceptualized as a discursive practice by which intellectuals of statecraft ‘spatialize’ international politics in such a way as to represent it as a ‘world’ characterized by particular types of places, peoples and dramas. In our understanding, the study of geopolitics is the study of the spatialization of international politics by core powers and hegemonic states (1992, p. 192).

Following from this, it can be suggested that the Arctic is not simply a product of nature, but an ‘empty space’ which needs to be filled, written, and constructed. I would argue that *there is no Arctic as such. Indeed, the Arctic does not have any essence*, but instead the word ‘Arctic’ is an ‘empty signifier’ (Laclau, 2007, pp. 36-46) of which different actors exploit different meanings and around which they construct discourses where different moments (e.g. polar bears, environment, states, science, and so on) are connected together to create certain totality. That there exists discourses in the society is the reason why we can still talk about and refer to the Arctic in our everyday life, even though it does not possess any essence. Discourses limit



the width of what can be said about and done towards objects (e.g. Arctic) and subjects (e.g. Arctic country) of the world and their social and political relationships (Howarth and Stavrakakis, 2000, p. 4; Epstein, 2008, p. 2). Without discourses, anything can be said about anything, which makes society as such impossible. At the same time, however, discourses are *not* and *will never be fixed* (Howarth and Stavrakakis, 2000, pp. 1-37; Laclau and Mouffe, 2001, pp. 93-148; Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002, pp. 24-59). It means writing of the Arctic spaces and discourses will never be finalized, but continuously go through the process of deconstruction and re-construction.

That the Arctic does not speak for itself implies that it is not the environmental change of the area that obliges states to act in certain ways, e.g. the expansion of sovereign claims or the establishment of international regimes, as neo-realists and liberals would argue. Rather, interpretation and construction of the geographical space and discourse called ‘Arctic’ as distinctive, exceptional, and emergent make possible states to pursue these actions that they want to fulfill (Dittmer et al, 2011, p. 203). Likewise, states (and certainly other actors too) attempt to define the Arctic in certain ways so that they can become principle actors in it. Legitimate entities who are entitled to have a say on the region change depending on how it is defined, for instance it as north of 60° N or 66°N parallel, or anywhere else. “[T]he Arctic is potentially an exclusionary geographical marker, a contested space open to competing definitions” (Dittmer et al., 2011, p. 210). Hence, there could be *multiple Arctics* at the same time, as has already been mentioned.

We can go one more step further from here. If the Arctic is born out of discursive practices and open to numerous definitions, identities of actors who (are assumed to) belong to it should also be regarded in the same manner, as there cannot be Arctic states without constructing the very Arctic. Arctic states construct the Arctic and conduct foreign policies in

relation to it not because they are essentially Arctic states. Rather, the construction of Arctic spaces and actors are constitutive and go in parallel. As David Campbell (1992, pp. 41-84) persuasively highlights, foreign policy is not the conduct of pre-established states within pre-established fields. Instead, very identities of these states and fields are made and re-made by performing foreign policy (Campbell, 1992, pp. 41-84; Hansen, 2006; Epstein, 2013, p. 510). For example, Russia seems to have set its national flag at the top of the world in order to enhance country's 'Arcticness' (actorness of the Arctic) and domestic and foreign awareness towards this region. "Intriguingly, the image of the flag planting on the bottom of the Arctic Ocean has been reproduced within Russia, and appeared on t-shirts in Moscow's Izmaylovo Market – a tourist heaven" (Dittmer et al. 2011, p. 208). The Arctic and Russia as an Arctic state were, in other words, enacted and taken shape by this deed. To repeat the point, the Arctic is not the place where totalized states only fight or cooperate to maximize their pre-given interests. Arctic politics, I suggest, has much more than this. This post-structuralistic understanding of geography, discourse, and identity will be the core of my thesis.

### 1.3. Overall Research Design

If uncovering the essence of the Arctic and its actors cannot be the aim of our voyage, a next best alternative is to examine and describe *the process* of how various actors have attempted to construct the Arctic(s) so that they can benefit from it. Discourse analysis seems to be a particularly suitable method for this purpose since it analyzes primarily written and spoken texts (languages), what actors say about objects and subjects of the world. "There is nothing outside the text" (Derrida in Howarth and Stavrakakis, 2000, p. 4). Discursive act is the first and only step for constructing the reality and feeling it as if it really existed (ibid.). Therefore, it is possible to trace the process of spatialization and likely political battles and contradictions across time and space by analyzing these empirical 'texts'.

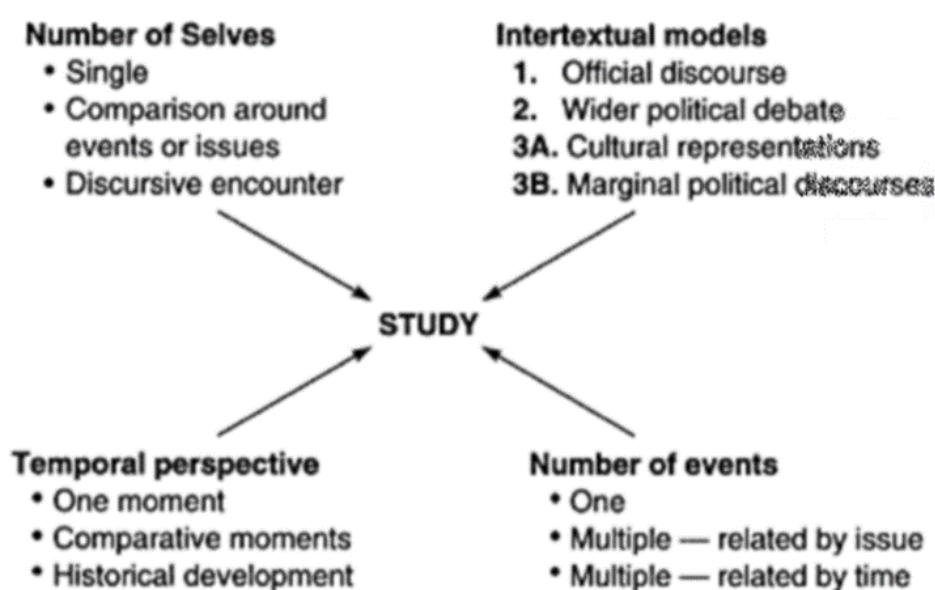
Many kinds of actors partake in writing of the Arctic space, as can be seen from a list of the participants of the Arctic Circle. Nevertheless, it is not possible to investigate all the players in Arctic history in a single research, so there needs to be some degree of focus and scope. According to Lene Hansen (2006, pp. 65-82, please also refer to the Figure 1 in the next page), there are four important dimensions to be asked when formulating the research design of (poststructuralist) discourse analysis; number of selves, intertextual models, temporal perspective, and number of event. Consideration of these points will automatically lay a good foundation to frame research questions for the thesis.

Regarding the number of selves, I have decided to concentrate on three states: Finland, Russia, and Singapore. Comparing and contrasting them can be highly interesting and valuable since each country represents different subject positions, the A5, the A8, and non-Arctic, in the discourses of the Arctic. For the purpose of this research, I will define countries that are other than the A8 as non-Arctic states. To identify how each actor articulates, legitimizes, and resists these subject positions in their discourses is exactly what this study aims to accomplish. In contrast to the recent diversification of actors in the region, most researches related to the Arctic are still unproportionally centered around the traditional Arctic states (A5), and little analysis has been done in terms of the A8 and non-Arctic states. Detailed comparative case studies between these three distinctive and at the same time fluid subject positions also barely exist. Thus, there is an interesting research gap here.

Moreover, each country has particular reasons for being chosen for investigation. Finland is selected because the country takes over as chair of the AC from the U.S.A. in May 2017, and consequently it is expected that the Finnish government and media has been/will be actively engaged with the region. Geographical vastness, its extensive Arctic coastline with untapped natural resources, and the unique history and culture related to the region make Russia a

further target of the research. Politically, it is one of the most influential countries not only in the Arctic, but also in world affairs. Singapore is also a suitable candidate since its construction and legitimization of its Arctic identity have very unique features, especially when its geographical remoteness from the area is considered. It is one of the twelve non-Arctic countries which have gained observer status in the AC and has actively involved in making of the Arctic space.

Figure 1: Research design for poststructuralist discourse analysis



Source: Hansen (2006, p. 72)

As can be seen from the Figure 1, there are four intertextual models to choose from when conducting discourse analysis (see also Hansen, 2006, p. 57). For example, one can study only an official discourse of a single or multiple countries. Conversely, one can also look at how and what kind of discourses are produced in daily lives through comics, movies, and music and compare them to official discourses. For this thesis, analysis of the three states will neatly correspond to the model 1. Here it is necessary to mention that discourses of the political oppositions in respective countries, which then belongs to the model 2, for instance how smaller parties such as Vihreä liitto in Finland are challenging the official Arctic

discourse of these states, will not be investigated because of the limitation of time and space. Therefore, empirical materials will be confined to political speeches solely at the official level (Presidential Office and Ministry of Foreign Affairs). Nonetheless, decent efforts will be made to explore the intertextual relation between the official and counter discourses, which means to what extent the official discourse of the three states refers to and engages with the counter discourse by other players such as non-Arctic states and Greenpeace. That the official discourse attempts actively to counter to the critical discourse will suggest that the states are finding it imperative to protect their discourses. If the official discourse does not interact with the counter discourse at all, it might be that the latter's power has not yet been strong and influential enough.

In terms of the temporal perspective, the thesis will be a single moment study (between 2001 and 2017, some variations depending on the case). A paradigm shift happened in the Arctic around when the Cold War ended and the Soviet Union collapsed (Åtland, 2008). Since then, it has been a single moment in which the A8 has been becoming and regarded as the official and natural Arctic actors by, for example, forming the AC although small changes have occurred from time to time. Last but not least, this research will be a single event study, and I define it, straightforwardly, as *writing of the Arctic discourse(s) and space(s)*.

## 1.4. Research Questions and the Thesis Structure

Having above discussion in mind, research questions can be structured as follows.

1. *What kind of Arctic discourses do governments of Finland, Russia, and Singapore pursue?*
2. *How differently or similarly do three countries attempt to construct and produce 'Arcticness' in order for them to secure higher subject positions in the North?*

This comparative-case study is not a journey to seek for any one truth as such, but to analyze carefully the process of writing of the Arctic space by these states. Data for discourse analysis will be primarily political speeches at important Arctic related conferences, events, and seminars such as the AC, the Arctic Circle, the Arctic Frontiers, and the Barents Euro-Arctic Council at which Arctic and non-Arctic countries alike convey and express strong messages to other stakeholders. These speeches will be gathered from the official websites of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Presidential Office of the respective states. As texts have to be interpreted to have meanings, my values and backgrounds will indispensably affect the whole process of analysis, which should be actively and positively embraced. In this sense, I am also a part of Arctic making with this thesis.

The study will be divided into the six chapters including this introduction. The next chapter will first present discourse theory of Laclau and Mouffe in detail and see how notions such as geography and identity can and should also be understood in the framework of discourse.

When the three concepts have been examined, fully understanding the uniqueness of poststructuralism and its analytical power will already be in our immediate reach. The chapter three will transform discourse ‘theory’ into ‘analysis’ and discuss it within a broader picture of science and methodology. It will also expand on the description of collected data and acknowledge some limitations of this study with counterarguments. This will be followed by the chapter four where I will review the current history of the Arctic by introducing both the today’s hegemonic and counter discourses. In the chapter five, the result of my analysis on Arctic discourses and Arcticity of Finland, Russia, and Singapore will be presented and discussed first separately, and then I will compare and contrast them to discover possible similarities and differences with some final thought. The last chapter will conclude the whole endeavor, and its potential for future researches will also be explored.

## 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

*“the will to know, including the desire to formulate context-transcending truths and to model social reality in terms of regularities, rules and laws is a disguised will to power aimed at waging war against the unruliness of human life and the interpretative possibilities of the world” (Merlingen, 2013)*

This chapter elucidates the three concepts, i.e. *discourse*, *geography*, and *identity*, around which my analysis will be evolved by drawing acumen from discourse theory of Laclau and Mouffe and critical geopolitics. At first sight, it might seem that these tenets are distinctive from each other, and each has its own analytical values. This is not the case, however. The chapter will clarify that geography and identity can and should be understood in the framework of discourse because the former are indispensable components of the latter. Therefore, not the first section about discourse theory alone, but the three sections combined will bring the whole picture of what discourse is all about. Having it explained, the seemingly puzzled theory of poststructuralism comes already in our reach, which will be briefly examined in the concluding section.

### 2.1. Discourse Theory by Laclau and Mouffe

There seems to be as many ways of understanding ‘discourse’ and conducting ‘discourse analysis’ as there are researchers who employ it (Torfing, 2005, pp. 5-9), and discourse theory (DT) is one of them. It was originated by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe in their 1985 (second edition in 2001) book ‘Hegemony and Socialist Strategy’ in which they fiercely criticized essentialism employed by the Marxist tradition such as class reductionism and economic determinism and manifested the more social, political, open, and contingent nature

of the world. As might be expected from the use of the term ‘theory’, DT consists of both theory and method, and they are indeed inseparably entwined. Their idea is based on, though not entirely, and evolves from the masterworks of contemporary philosophers, Antonio Gramsci, Michel Foucault, Jacques Lacan, and others.

The most important premise of DT is its *anti-essentialist ontology* which must be followed throughout its theory (Torfing, 2005, p. 13). “Society and social agents lack any essence, and their regularities merely consist of the relative and precarious forms of fixation which accompany the establishment of a certain order” (Laclau and Mouffe, 2001, p. 98). While the Marxist theory speculated that economy or ‘modes of production’ determined many, if not all, aspects of society, for DT this primacy has been taken by politics (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002, pp. 34-38). Other major traditions of discourse analysis are, among others, discursive psychology and critical discourse analysis which will be shortly compared with DT from a stand point of science and methodology in the next chapter.

Laclau and Mouffe (2001, p. 105) explain discourse as “the structured totality resulting from the articulatory practice” while Jennifer Milliken (1999, p. 229) puts it as “structures of signification which construct social realities”. A definition by David Howarth and Yannis Stavrakakis (2000, p. 3), today’s prominent figures in DT, is somewhat more concrete: “a social and political construction that establishes a system of relations between different objects and practices, while providing (subject) positions with which social agents can identify”. In line with these definitions, I suggest that discourse is the temporarily constructed totality which covers over entire society and reduces the possibilities of what we can think of and say about objects and subjects of the world. The three definitions clearly show that discourse is not only about the linguistic level, its features and techniques, as linguists and other discourse analysts might describe. In DT, discourse is inherently political and social.



Furthermore, Laclau and Mouffe (2001, p. 107; see also Müller, 2008, pp. 329-330) assert that “every object is constituted as an object of discourse” and reject to distinguish the social practices into discursive and non-discursive spheres. Objects cannot be perceived as something without being positioned inside discourses because of their non-essential characteristics. However, the existence of reality, physical and material objects (like chairs and stones) is *not* denied (Howarth and Stavrakakis, 2000, p. 3; Laclau and Mouffe, 2001, p. 108; Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002, pp. 34-38; Hansen, 2006, pp. 19-20). As an oft-cited passage of Laclau and Mouffe further clarifies:

The fact that every object is constituted as an object of discourse has *nothing to do* with whether there is a world external to thought, or with the realism/idealism opposition. An earthquake or the falling of a brick is an event that certainly exists, in the sense that it occurs here and now, independently of my will. But whether their specificity as objects is constructed in terms of ‘natural phenomena’ or ‘expressions of the wrath of God’, depends upon the structuring of a discursive field. What is denied is not that such objects exist externally to thought, but the rather different assertion that they could constitute themselves as objects outside any discursive condition of emergence (2001, p.108, emphasis in original).

By putting it another way, objects can be given meanings, although contingent, and accessed by human beings *only* through discourses.

Let me take an example of the whale. Historically and equally today, according to Charlotte Epstein (2008), what the whale means to people differs depending on the characteristics of discourses in which it resides. It can possibly mean ‘food and fuel’, ‘cute animal and symbol of environmental protection’, and ‘sacred god’ in such discourses as ‘capitalist’, ‘environmental’, and ‘religious’. These discourses also determine what can and should be done towards the whale from mass-killing to active protection. The fact that the world was indeed whaling-world until several decades ago has become hard, if not impossible, to imagine today precisely because of an effect and power of anti-whaling discourse. To explain

logically these variations of meanings that the whale cast to us appears to be significantly hard if we assume that the whale possesses some sort of inner fixed essence.

Now I will introduce the key terms of DT. A discourse as a temporary end product is composed of many signs called *moments*, and each moment is placed and given a certain meaning in relation to other moments within the particular domain (discourse). All those signs that are NOT positioned in discourses are called *elements in the field of discursivity*. Elements are different from moments because they are polysemic signs “whose meanings have not yet been fixed” (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002, p. 27). Elements are still open to multiple meanings while those of moments are already closed in the discourse. Those elements that are especially subject to diverse ascriptions of meaning are named as *floating signifiers*. They are “the signs that different discourses struggle to invest with meaning in their own particular way” (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002, p. 28). Whatever practices which attempt to attach certain meanings onto and establish relations between elements, transform them into moments, and finally a totalized discourse are named as *articulation* (Howarth and Stavrakakis, 2000, pp. 7-9; Laclau and Mouffe, 2001, pp. 105 & 112). When articulations succeed, elements lose its polysemy, become moments, and no longer subject to multiple definitions. DT embodies politics as “struggles to fix meanings at all levels of the social” (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002, p. 24), in which articulation takes center stage.

Importantly, every moment does not have equal status, but some are more powerful than others. These privileged signs are termed as *nodal points* of discourses. Nodal points are privileged, as other moments establish their positions and meanings by ordering and relating themselves to the former (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002, p. 26). For example, the nodal point of political discourses of some countries could be ‘democracy’ in and around which other moments such as ‘election’, ‘freedom’, and ‘people’ are employed to signify the former. Other

countries may construct this nodal point differently by adopting different moments and articulating them in different ways, as has been demonstrated by, for example Russia which has called its own democracy ‘sovereign democracy’ (Surkov, 2009).

Contrary to expectations, nodal points are not usually thick or dense words, but rather *empty signifiers* which can be defined as “a signifier without a signified” (Laclau, 2007, p. 36). They are empty in themselves. This emptiness is the reason why nodal points can draw other moments, situate in the heart of discourses, and signify the totality as a whole. Laclau (2007, p. 44) convincingly claims that “[p]olitics is possible because the constitutive impossibility of society can only represent itself through the production of empty signifiers”. Thus, politics can be seen also as discursive battles to fill the emptiness of signs with certain *universal* contents by means of articulations. Democracy and many other social facts and entities such as market, nation, and Europe can ultimately mean anything depending on how they are articulated in diverse discourses for the reason that they are unfilled signs which need to be filled by human beings.

This filling process never ends, however. Whenever a sign loses its polysemy or gets stuffed with a certain meaning, it inevitably omits other meanings that the sign could have signified, and these excluded “surplus of meaning[s]” (Laclau and Mouffe, 2001, p. 111) continue to be present as elements in the field of discursivity. Significantly, these (excluded) elements could potentially become moments of certain discourses by any actors at any time, which could influence the nature of the discourses in question since a meaning of each sign is always relational. Having discourses restructured with the participation of new signs (elements), some original moments may lose their status and get expelled to the field of discursivity. It works in both directions, which means discourses (have to) exist in relation to the field of discursivity and vice versa.

For this reason, discourses are *not and will never be fixed*, although they are not completely open and fluid. Society covered by discourses is likewise incomplete and always *in the process of becoming* a fully delimited society, which is the recurring theme of the book by Laclau and Mouffe. They (2001, p. 111) emphasize that “[t]he incomplete character of every totality necessarily leads us to abandon, as a terrain of analysis, the premise of ‘society’ as a sutured and self-defined totality”. That being said, nevertheless, we still live and act as if “the ‘reality’ around us has a stable and unambiguous structure; as if society, the groups we belong to, and our identity, are objectively given facts” (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002, p. 33) because certain things need to be taken for granted to lead our daily lives stably (Neumann, 2008, pp. 73-74). We have to otherwise start questioning everything every time we wake up in the morning: ‘What is country?’ ‘What is Antarctica?’ and so on. Not doing so does not mean that these entities are objectively given facts which dictate human beings. Instead, DT aims to uncover how they come to be regarded as natural and constructed as objective reality through articulatory practices by a selected group of people (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002, p. 33).

Those discourses which are especially stable and dominant can be said to have *hegemonic status* in society (Laclau and Mouffe, 2001, pp. 134-145; Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002, pp. 47-49). Common sense and truth are ultimate products of hegemonic discourses (Epstein, 2008, p. 14) because of its seeming objectiveness and naturalness which make it so challenging to see alternative ways of organizing the world. For example, children are assigned a specific position and treated differently from adults (e.g. given protection and special rights) in today’s developed countries, owing to the discourse about children (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002, p. 36). That children should not be exploited as labor force and deprived of their educational rights and general childhood is nearly universal common sense. But in the past, children were more or less seen and understood from the perspective of ‘small adults’ (ibid.) and assumed to perform accordingly. This change implies that today’s common

sense or “regime of truth” (Milliken, 1999, p. 229) was also constructed and born out of political struggles and discursive battles to define the children in certain manners at some point in history.

Seemingly objective knowledge and common sense which many people accept without question are always situated in certain time, places, and contexts, and therefore subject to change. Current regime of truth may lose its position in the future because discourses are never entirely sedimented, which necessitates writers of the dominant discourse “work to ‘articulate’ and ‘rearticulate’ their knowledges and identities” (Milliken, 1999, p. 230) to maintain its supremacy. Social fact is always unstable and contingent and subject to *counter discourses* which are most often claimed by marginalized and excluded actors in the main storyline. When there is (becomes) no hegemonic discourse in society, authors of several discourses compete (again) to achieve it so as to bring their specific ways of organizing the world to the forefront.

The main work of discourse theory, therefore, is to deconstruct and denaturalize established (sometime hegemonic) discourses and these taken for granted truth and common sense which social actors articulate in speeches and written texts. Deconstruction exposes the unfixedity, undecidability, contingency, and political nature of the social. Examining how targeted discourses are structured and how they battle each other for hegemonic status are the first steps for its work, but it should be reminded that deconstruction is done from not outside, but within given structures. “The movements of deconstruction do not destroy structures from the outside. They are not possible and effective, nor can they take accurate aim, except by inhabiting those structures” (Derrida in Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002, p. 49). It is not simply possible for us to go beyond discourses since the world can be deciphered only through them of which we are part (Sjölander, 2011, p. 19). Intend it or not, denaturalization is also a way of

articulation and political intervention which impact back on discourses which are already in place.

In the context of this study, the main supposition is that the sign 'Arctic' is (has been) an empty signifier, i.e. the largest nodal point of the discourse, which can contain a vast number of moments and nodal points. Finland, Russia and Singapore are striving to construct Arctics in ways that they want them to be and giving specific meanings onto them by connecting particular elements and transforming them into moments of their discourses with the means of articulation such as giving political speeches and publishing national strategies (e.g. Finland develops its Arctic strategies not because it is an Arctic actor in nature, but because it wants to become the one). Each actor is competing for hegemony to render their individual Arctics the universal one, or it might be that they cooperate to create the dominant Arctic discourse together if their worldviews and interests, concerning the region, are similar among themselves. In any case, ongoing and ever-lasting political battles to define and fill the empty signifier 'Arctic' will be intensely unraveled later in the thesis by applying the wisdom of DT.

## 2.2. Critical Geopolitics

Critical geopolitics advocates that geography is a social and political discourse (Ó Tuathail and Agnew, 1992, p. 192). The geography of the world is not an innocent, objective, and fixed reality waiting to be discovered, but a mere product of endless spatialization or earth-making by human beings (Ó Tuathail, 1996, pp. 1-3). The constructed nature of geography suggests that its discourse can be deconstructed and reconstructed in different ways. History and the fate of human beings are not determined by geography, and the world in which we currently live is just one of possible many outcomes (Wilson Rowe, 2013, p. 234).

This understanding is radically dissimilar to that of traditional (classical) geopolitics, which insists on the unchangeable character of geography and its determinative influence on human history. Nicholas Spykman (1944, p. 41) once noted that “[g]eography is the most fundamental factor in foreign policy because it is the most permanent”. It was seen that the options of what countries (and others) can do are always limited by where they are located, for example their access to oceans, availability of natural resources, and climates. Therefore, they would have to consider geographical factors when drafting their national strategies in order to gain a decisive advantage from them and consequently to survive in this dangerous world. A prominent example in this regard is provided by Halford Mackinder (1919), who coined the ‘heartland theory’ and urged Britain, which was then the leading sea power, to take preventive actions to prepare for the upcoming rise of land powers with the invention of railways. Another well-known case is the American containment policy during the Cold War. As can be seen from these examples, classical geopolitics has been utilized by countries to predict geographically the future balance of power, help them draft their grand strategy, and legitimize their actions for survival (Ó Tuathail and Agnew, 1992, p. 192). For classical geopoliticians, geography is already there on earth to be read with strategic gazes.

However, critical geopoliticians have strongly dismissed this essentialistic and simplistic view by contending that geography is fundamentally much more heterogeneous, complex, and messy than the picture offered by, for example the Cold War discourse (Ó Tuathail and Agnew, 1992, p. 202). Instead of being the hard truth, critical geopolitics regards these catchy geographical representations as products of carefully articulated discourses. The movers and shakers of the world deliberately reduce the messiness of geography to controllable and simple units so that they become able to govern certain spaces and do something in relation to them (e.g. invasion and bombardment). Indeed, modern history after the Peace of Westphalia can be represented as a period in which the entire earth has been spatialized and domesticated

by sovereign states, if not a handful of hegemonic powers. As Laclau and Mouffe further add:

The autonomy of the State as a whole - assuming for a moment that we can speak of it as a unity - depends on the construction of a political space which can only be the result of hegemonic articulations (2001, p. 140).

The Construction of the (inter-)national space as such and the emergence of nation-states have been inseparably entwined and have proceeded concomitantly, in which the knowledge/power nexus of classical geopolitics has been a powerful aid (Ó Tuathail, 1996, p. 9). Geopolitical knowledge is always imbued with power and ideology and situated in certain places, time, and contexts (idem, p. 8; Ó Tuathail and Dalby, 2002, pp. 5-6). Ó Tuathail and Agnew (1992, p. 194) uphold that “[t]o designate a place is not simply to define a location or setting. It is to open up a field of possible taxonomies and trigger a series of narratives, subjects and appropriate foreign-policy responses”. For critical geopoliticians, geography is not a background where politics occurs, but an indispensable component of world politics.

Spatialization entails the building of boundaries: labeling somewhere as inside creates its outside at the same time, and they are thus mutually constitutive. Rigid borders are therefore regularly constructed in a simple manner on the binary axis of secure ‘inside’ and threatening ‘outside’ (Walker, 1993, pp. 159-183; Müller, 2008, p. 323; Agnew, 2010, p. 570). A typical example is the division of the West and the East. The former has repeatedly narrated the latter as being traditional, obsolete, and non-scientific. In discourse theoretical terms, these ‘traditionalness’ ‘obsoleteness’, and ‘non-scientificness’ are binded moments centering around the discourse of the East. By constructing this sort of discourse, the West becomes able to naturally claim that it has a mission to govern the East because it is more scientific and rational. Similarly, after 9/11, the U.S.A. and its allies could deploy their militaries in Iraq because they succeeded in constructing throughout the world the discourse that the



government of Saddam Hussein were ‘evil’ and ‘bad’, and had to be eliminated by ‘good’.

Scholars of critical geopolitics point out that these simplified binaries can be dangerous and harmful to some while benefiting others who have already power and take dominant positions in society. Hence, one should attempt to deconstruct and denaturalize them in order to capture again the complexity and messiness of geography, identity and the world itself (Dodds et al, 2013, pp. 7-8).

As geography is a discourse, there is no doubt that DT and critical geopolitics supplement each other, and I am in agreement with Müller (2010, emphasis in original) that “critical geopolitics does not *work* with discourse analysis as an instrument but it rather *is* discourse analysis”. Yet, two things should be remembered when contemplating their compatibilities at a deeper level. Firstly, the understanding of discourse by critical geopolitics tends to be excessively agent-centric (Müller, 2008, pp. 324-326). Discourse was regarded as resources or capabilities used by an autonomous subject for spatialization, particularly in the early days of the discipline’s development (Ó Tuathail and Agnew, 1992, pp. 192-193; Müller, 2008, pp. 324-325). Literally accepting this is hard for DT because it asserts that discourse is diffuse and not owned by anyone, and what individuals can do and say is, to some extent if not severely, limited by discourses. This is not to say, however, that we are mere products of discourses and absolutely determined by the structure. DT rather takes the middle point between these two extremes.

Secondly, after reflecting on criticisms towards its excessive textual analysis, critical geopolitics has started to focus more on materials and practices in a way to separate between the representational and non-representational domains (Müller, 2008). This is not agreeable for DT for the reason that it does not distinguish the discursive sphere from the non-discursive. Rather, everything including concrete objects and performances is part of

discourses. “[T]he practice of articulation ... cannot consist of purely linguistic phenomena; but must instead pierce the entire material density of the multifarious institutions, rituals and practices through which a discursive formation is structured” (Laclau and Mouffe, 2001, p. 109; see also Hansen, 2006, pp. 19-20). In the very context of everyday life practices, discourses are produced, resisted, and reproduced. When these two caveats are acknowledged, I believe that the insight of critical geopolitics can give DT the powerful edge for investigating the spatial dimension of discourses.

### 2.3. Identity as Performative and Subject Positions

The previous two sections in which the (post-structuralist) ideas of ‘discourse’ and ‘geography’ have been elaborated make it fairly straightforward to explain how the concept of ‘identity’ will be applied in this study. In precisely the same way as the creation of geographical space, DT and critical geopolitics presume that the identities of both individuals and collectives are socially constructed through discourses. Actors cannot possess a priori established nor permanently fixed identities because meanings are always relational and in flux, which makes the finalization of discourses unachievable. Alternatively, subjects of the world are made and remade through their articulatory practices. In other words, identity is *performative* from the viewpoint of agency. For instance, states as clearly delimited entities do not exist prior to and independent of their conduct of foreign policies, but their identities are constructed and reconstructed through them (Campbell, 1992, pp. 8-12 & 41-83; Hansen, 2006, pp. 20-25). Post-structuralists characterize foreign policy as boundary making between states and thus construction of the international system itself while it has been traditionally described as bridge building between pre-established states *and* the international system (Campbell, 1992, pp. 56 & 69). Nevertheless, this is just one side of the coin because constructed identities in return impact on foreign policies by rendering some choices

thinkable and others undoable. Identities and articulatory practices (e.g. speeches and foreign policies) are therefore a mutual process.

Similarly to the social, states and any other beings can never manage to become fully themselves. As David Campbell persuasively argues:

[S]tates are never finished as entities; the tension between the demands of identity and the practices that constitute it can never be fully resolved, because the performative nature of identity can never be fully revealed. This paradox inherent to their being renders states in permanent need of reproduction: with no ontological status apart from the many and varied practices that constitute their reality, states are (and have to be) always in a process of becoming (1992, p. 11).

Contrary to what may appear to be the case, states need danger and construct deliberately various kinds of threats (e.g. military, economic, and environmental) emanating from radical others inside and outside their borders in order to keep this ‘process of becoming’ ongoing (Campbell, 1992, pp. 53-56; Hansen, 2006, pp. 29-32). States are not there to protect citizens from threats, but their existence hinges on them because articulated danger gives them both *responsibility* and legitimate *power* to act on people’s behalf. These threats are articulated, more often than not, to originate from *spatially* differentiated and threatening others as was the case in the Cold War and the War on Terror. Another possibility is that subjects may construct themselves by putting former selves of the past as radical others. Ole Weaver (in Hansen, 2006, p. 36, emphasis by the author) claims that the EU “is constituted ... against a *temporal* Other: the fear of a return of its own violent past”. The hopelessness of attaining totalized selves makes the temporal perspective necessary and significantly attractive for any subjects. I assert that the Arctic countries are no exceptions in this regard. They are trying to become more flawless Arctic states by publishing relevant strategies, planting their national flags here and there, and simply talking about this mythically constructed space.

Identity can be defined as *identification* if the structural (discourse's) point of view is emphasized. What subjects can be are already limited by the effect of discourses and, they can acquire their identities only by identifying themselves with *subject positions* that are available within discourses (Doty, 1993, pp. 303-305; Laclau and Mouffe, 2001, p. 115; Epstein, 2008, pp. 13-16; Epstein, 2010, pp. 343-344; Müller, 2008, p. 330). To put it more concretely, an actor 'S' acquires identity by stepping into certain subject positions 'A', 'B', or 'C' in a discourse 'X', and each subject position determines to a certain degree what are sayable and doable for that actor. Neither subject positions nor the field of possible actions are essential and permanent in any sense exactly because of the fluid nature of discourses. The emergence of new subject positions, moreover, should not be precluded, as has been demonstrated by its recent formation 'near Arctic states' in Arctic discourses. Postulating identity in this way, according to Epstein (2010, pp. 343-344), help IR scholars circumvent the level-of-analysis problem which has troubled the field since its inception. It becomes no longer necessary to enquire whether states have emotion and can be treated as humans, like humans, or not because the discursive approach to identity instead sheds light on what individuals and collectives have in common that is the fact that they both speak. Social actors are "first and foremost speaking actors" (ibid.), and by speaking in a wider sense, i.e. articulatory practices, they construct and place themselves in the world through their engagement with(in) discourses.

## 2.4. Conclusion: Power of Poststructuralism

To summarize the whole chapter, I will briefly explore the uniqueness and power of poststructuralism and its major difference from other mainstream IR theories, which can be observed from its understanding of the three examined concepts, namely discourse, geography, and identity. Poststructuralism entered into IR in the 1980s and has problematized

the way conventional theories such as realism and neorealism ‘practiced’ naturalizing one mode of representation of the world over another (Campbell, 2013, pp. 226). In particular, it has criticized the fact that these theories characterized world politics *apolitically* and *ahistorically* as the relations primarily, if not solely, between pre-given sovereign states. As such, poststructuralism treats theory as ‘an object of critical analysis’ rather than ‘a tool for it’ (Campbell, 2013, p. 236). In order to maintain its critical attitude towards world politics, this school of thought has a strong will and intention *not* to adopt the transcended perspective and hang on the essence of things to explain the world, which has all the time haunted scholars of IR since it originated. Human nature (Morgenthau, 1948), hierarchy of international system (Waltz, 2000; Mearsheimer, 2014), and geographical features (Mackinder, 1919; Spykman, 1944) are chief examples of the essence with which they tried to uncover world politics. Even the godfather of constructivism, Alexander Wendt, could not escape from it with his reification of identity of the state and self (Hansen, 2006, pp. 20-22; Epstein, 2010, pp. 329-333; Epstein, 2013, pp. 504-506).

The above examples of explanations of world phenomena were fair attempts and unquestionably contributed to the development of the field. However, they could offer only a partial picture because they failed to ask how ‘human’ ‘international system’ ‘geography’, and ‘state’ became to be characterized in some specific ways and not others (e.g. desire for power and anarchy). As Laclau and Mouffe (2001, pp. 116-117) demonstrate, they are *empty signifiers* which have been filled in diverse ways in different time, places, and contexts. Poststructuralism in a way (re)politicizes and (re)historicizes these signs and put them in critical investigation. More importantly for my argument, these signifiers and hence discourses lack “any transcendental signified” (Merlingen, 2013) because signs are always relational, and excluded meanings can be revived at any time by any actors. Therefore, fixed essence as such is not possible in our world, and basing scientific arguments on it seems to be

futile from the very beginning.

What would be the consequences and advantages when giving up the transcended vantage point and adopting the poststructuralist way of thinking? Firstly, we become able to ask more critical ‘how’ questions on top of ‘why’ questions (Doty, 1993, pp. 297-299). While traditional theorists would ask ‘why Arctic states cooperate or conflict in the Arctic?’, poststructuralists can inquire ‘how some states are enabled to act as Arctic states and characterize a certain place as Arctic?’. In this way, they have the power to de-essentialize truth and common sense that are mechanically taken for granted by society and certain scholars. Secondly, we become able to examine ideographic cases which are always unique and situated in certain particular contexts (Merlingen, 2013). Its downside is, of course, not to be able to generalize across cases and over time, but to claim so means already to miss the specific worldview offered by this approach. Lastly, we become able to seek to “cultivate the abundance of a world that is always in the process of becoming ... [and open] up new thinking spaces in which many different local and unruly practices and identities can flourish” (Merlingen, 2013). On these accounts, it is no longer an exaggeration to assert that poststructuralism can give my research great analytical power and insights and that it deserves much brighter attention and finer credits in the field of IR.

### 3. METHODOLOGICAL ORIENTATIONS

*“A ‘scientific’ approach attempting to determine the ‘essence’ of the social would, in actual fact, be the height of utopianism” (Laclau and Mouffe, 2001, p. 143)*

In this chapter, firstly I will transform discourse theory (DT) into discourse ‘analysis’ (DA) and describe the latter in terms of science and methodology. For that purpose, its analytical approach and relationship with empirical materials will be reviewed and compared mainly to that of critical discourse analysis (CDA). After countering an idea that DA is not science, a theoretically informed and tailor-made checklist for the study and gathered research data will be introduced in detail. Finally, I will acknowledge the limitations of this research with some counterarguments.

#### 3.1. Discourse Theory to Discourse ‘Analysis’

DT and DA are two sides of the same coin, and its transition can be simply realized when its theoretical framework is applied to empirical cases of the world for examination (Müller, 2010). DA “refers to the practice of analyzing empirical raw materials and information as discursive forms” (Howarth and Stavrakakis, 2000, p. 4). Apart from this, DT does not offer any methodological guidelines nor concrete steps to follow for its application. It refuses, more aptly, to do so because rigidization and systemization of analytical procedures could ruin its flexibility and ability to adapt to fast-changing worlds and capture each empirical case that is always unique and context-specific (Howarth, 2005, p. 317).

This is drastically different from other approaches of text analysis such as CDA, which proposes stepwise approaches although non-linear (Sjölander, 2011, p. 35), and quantitative

content analysis that always proceeds with a pre-determined coding scheme (Neuendorf, 2004, p. 34; White and Marsh, 2006, pp. 31-33; Franzosi, 2007). A main advantage of installing the rigid structure is to improve the replicability and validity of the research, as it would become possible, in the extreme case, to reach the same outcome no matter who analyzes the data and when and where it is analyzed. What is more, it may pave the way for generalization across cases. However, this does not fit to the particular worldview assumed by DT that is the decidedly contingent and fluid nature of the world. It would be highly undesirable, if any, to apply the pre-determined model to any empirical case if one presupposes that *worlds* keep changing and cannot be accessed from the stable center (objectively). This does not mean that DA cannot provide anything useful. Instead of the universal truth, it can offer “strong claims, but within more bounded historical and temporal domains” (Hopf, 2004, p. 31). DA seems to be a suitable method for answering deeply how and why questions of specific cases, which are not generalizable in nature. Consequently, what each (poststructuralist) analyst has to do is to tailor-make his/her own DA in a way to suit to the aim and object of the individual study (Müller, 2010) and to achieve some degree of systematicness as high as to the extent possible *in it*. It is not enough to merely and randomly quote something from speeches. My own model for this study will be presented in the following section.

For DA, empirical raw materials and information consist of every kinds of linguistic (e.g. speeches and interviews) and non-linguistic (e.g. events and organizations) data, and it treats them both as ‘texts’ (Howarth and Stavrakakis, 2000, p. 4; Neumann, 2008, p. 63). This is due to its premise that any signifying practices to fix a web of meanings are counted as articulation. Although exploiting natural resources and sailing in the Arctic are non-verbal acts, particular representation of the region is certainly designed, strengthened, and redesigned through each enactment. DA does not, moreover, necessitate other theories such as social and



economic rather than its own because it does not separate the discursive domain from non-discursive. Every data can be analyzed by its concepts and the discursive logic.

This can be visibly contrasted with CDA because it recognizes the world outside discourses that is dictated non-discursively by other social practices and structures such as class, ethnicity, and gender (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002, pp. 60-64). “[T]he discursive constitution of society does not emanate from a free play of ideas in people’s heads but from a social practice which is firmly rooted in and oriented to real, material social structures” (Fairclough, 1992, p. 66). Consequently, CDA claims that it is not possible to study the phenomena and the world by purely analyzing languages and texts (in a wider sense) as discursive forms (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002, p. 24). Nonetheless, Jacob Torfing (2005, p. 9; see also Sjölander, 2011, p. 35) claims that the difference between the two becomes smaller when it comes to the actual analysis partially because CDA still tends to examine the discursive practice only and fails to explain how discourses and (non-discursive) social practices are linked and influenced each other. It is also because establishing a clear dividing line between discursive and non-discursive spheres seems to be a tricky business (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002, pp. 89-92).

A belief that every text cannot be detached from its contexts in order to mean is what DA agrees with CDA (Sjölander, 2011, p. 33). This commonality occurs due to the fact that they both share same philosophical ontology “mind-world monism” (Jackson, 2010, pp. 35-36), which claims that knowledge-producers and their values and beliefs are constitutive of and inseparable from the world(s) and text(s) which they study. When conducting research, discourse analysts actively admit that they are embedded into the very discourses that they investigate, and even their contribution to constructing or deconstructing these is said to be vital. Texts are not expected to reflect the world innocently as it is, but their meanings depend

on contexts such as who read them and when and where they are read. This philosophical ontology is, according to Jackson (2010, pp. 24-40), *problematically NOT* shared by the dominant IR position ‘neopositivism’ which takes instead a stand of ‘mind-world dualism’ by arguing that there exists the stable and independent world, and therefore it is possible for researchers to observe and investigate it out of any context from the third person point of view. It is problematic in a sense not because ‘mind-world dualism’ is erroneous, but because neopositivists accept it as a matter of course and undertake that “most IR scholars already *share* [this] philosophical ontology” (Jackson, 2010, p. 40, emphasis in original). By assuming in this way, they tend not to engage and discuss actively with other scholars who embrace the different position such as DA and CDA and, in the worst case, discard the latter’s research as being not science (idem, pp. 24-40). This cannot be justified at all because the (philosophical) ontological question is far from and does not appear to be settled soon in philosophy of science, and hence declaring which one is decisively correct is impossible at this point, if not forever.

Toward this problem, Jackson’s solution (2010) was to broaden the definition of science once again and clarify a variety of philosophical ontologies with which each distinctive group lives in order to prevent scholars from merely attacking and labeling each other as ‘unscientific’ and instead promote an active and lively discussion between them. I strongly agree with him that neopositivism is not the only way of doing science, and internal validity within a research, that is to say whether the study, given its assumptions, produces worldly knowledge with systematic (not in a causal sense) and rigorous analysis and logical arguments, should be decisive criteria to gain its scientific status. As previous studies have shown and this thesis will demonstrate, DA seems to correspond neatly to this notion of *broadly* defined science.

### 3.2. Checklist for Discourse Analysis: The Author's Model

In order to make my discourse analysis and thinking process as clear as possible, I will provide below a checklist with which gathered data will be perused. This was drafted particularly for this study, and each point is based on the theoretical discussion we had in the previous chapter. Therefore, meanings of the particular concepts will not be explained here again. I have chosen the ones which seem to be especially relevant to uncovering and deconstructing Arctic discourses and Arcticness (accompanied within them) of the three states, namely Finland, Russia, and Singapore. These points are:

- *What are nodal points in Arctic discourses of Finland, Russia, and Singapore? How are they connected?*
- *What are floating signifiers to which each country gives different meanings?*
- *What elements are actively omitted from their discourses?*
- *How are the subject positions (A5, A8, and near/non-Arctic) articulated, legitimized, and resisted in their discourses?*
- *How have Finland, Russia, and Singapore as Arctic subjects changed over time?*
- *How are particular futures and responsibilities articulated towards the region?*
- *How is particular knowledge about the Arctic naturalized as common sense?*
- *To what extent do their discourses refer to and engage with counter discourses?*

Regarding the final point, the next chapter on current Arctic history will further clarify what kinds of counter discourses have recently emerged in and around the Arctic.

It is important to note that these are not research questions on the ground that they are not meant to be answered in a strict and orderly manner although it is expected that scrutinizing empirical data in these lines inevitably helps me answer them. More crucially for discourse analysts, the list is *not* exhaustive, so texts would be possibly scanned external to it. Defining the above guidelines in such a loose fashion can prevent me from losing the flexibility of DA, but at the same time make the research as systematic and transparent as possible.

### 3.3. Research Data

As the Table 1 below illustrates, a total of 74 ‘texts’, mostly speeches, were used as research data for this study. They were collected from the official websites of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the President’s Office of the respective countries by browsing internally with a search keyword ‘Arctic’. From the initial hits, I further filtered and deleted the ones which barely touched upon the subject in question (e.g. few use of the word ‘Arctic’ in a whole lengthy speech). I am confident that the chosen materials met at least two of the three criteria suggested by Hansen (2006, p. 76; see also Jensen and Skedsmo, 2010, p. 441) for gathering primary texts to successfully study discourses at the official level.

Table 1: Research data

	How many	When	What	Where	Who
Finland	38	2001~2016	Political speeches (36) Strategies (2)	Arctic Council Arctic Frontiers Arctic Circle Domestic meeting Seminars Conferences Forums Summits	Sauli Niinistö Erkki Tuomioja Alexander Stubb Timo Soini Paavo Väyrynen Pertti Torstila Jaakko Laajava Peter Stenlund Hannu Halinen
Russia	23	2004~2016	Political speeches (20) Interviews (2) Article (1)	Arctic Council Barents Euro-Arctic Council Forums A5 meetings Domestic meetings Exhibition	Vladimir Putin Dmitry Medvedev Sergey Lavrov Vladimir Titov
Singapore	13	2013~2017	Political speeches (13)	Arctic Frontiers Arctic Circle Arctic Circle Singapore Forum Arctic Circle Greenland Forum Exhibition Workshop Parliament	Tony Tan K. Shanmugam Sam Tan Teo Chee Hean

Firstly, they clearly and explicitly articulated Arctic identities and policies. The political

speeches are usually more expressive than legal documents, resolutions, and declarations, which made it easy for me to apply the chosen method (Hansen, 2006, p. 76). The two Finnish Arctic strategies published in 2010 and 2013 respectively were studied in order to acquire some background knowledge and information behind Finland's Arctic articulations, but they were not in a part of in-depth analysis. Russian Arctic strategies were not included, as they had not been officially translated into English (regarding the language limitation, please see the next section). As a late comer to the region, Singapore had not published such documents yet, and its first speech came only after 2013. All the texts occurred in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, but the exact period varies depending on the case.

Secondly, they were “widely read and attended to” (Hansen, 2006, p. 76). Most of these speeches and two interviews by media of the Russian case were occurred at the internationally recognized premises such the AC, the Arctic Circle, the Arctic Frontiers, and other relevant exhibitions, forums, and seminars in which the movers and shakers of the world listened and discussed about the Arctic to decide its future(s). A couple of speeches happened at the domestic level, for example meetings of the Russian Security Council, might not have passed this second condition. Nonetheless, they were still included because they met the third criterion that was to “have the formal authority to define a political position” (Hansen, 2006, p. 76). As can be seen from the Table 1, articulators of the chosen texts were the authoritative and influential leaders of the respective states such as Presidents, Ministers, and Secretaries. Hence, I argue that, together with clarifying the first two criteria, my research data had had enough discursive power to define and influence on writing of the Arctic discourse(s) and space(s) and were well worthy of being subject to the deep investigation of poststructuralist discourse analysis.

### 3.4. Limitations of the Study

I would like to acknowledge some limitations of my study. Firstly, the data did not include non-verbal materials which are also regarded as discursive ‘texts’ by DA (Howarth and Stavrakakis, 2000, p. 4). Notwithstanding their importance, I have decided to focus solely on linguistic resources (i.e. speeches and interviews) because “political collectives, states in particular, are very verbal entities” (Hansen, 2006, p. 21). An infinite number of political speeches addressed in day-to-day situations manifest that states express and construct themselves, first and foremost, by speaking domestically and internationally. Writing of Arctic spaces does not begin without it.

Secondly, research data was restricted to the official level and therefore did not include other kinds of potentially interesting sources such as films, pictures, and marginal newspapers that are produced and disseminated, for example within local communities. Nonetheless, this was not a limitation, but the necessary scope which needed to be made so as to narrow down the research. As Hansen (p. 57) illustrates, more the intertextual models (see the Figure 1 in p. 8) a study includes, more diffuse and multifarious resources it requires, which would be challenging to put in a single research. Therefore, I believe that concentrating exclusively on official discourses of the three states has been a reasonable decision.

The third constraint could be author’s limited skills to study Arctic discourses. Iver B. Neumann (2008, pp. 63-65) points out that some degree of ‘cultural competence’ such as being familiar with languages and cultures of examined countries is a prerequisite for discourse analysts to fully understand meanings inscribed in texts. As for the language skills, my solution was not to use materials written in any other language but in English. This is not as critical a flaw as it appears to be because Arctic politics is more about international than

domestic affairs. Many speeches concerning the region are given in English in the international arena or translated afterwards by the respective countries. Using only English sources, therefore, rather seemed to be a sensible move. The lack of Arctic ‘cultural competence’ has been largely compensated by the fact that I have lived in Norway and Finland and continuously and rigorously studied Arctic issues for the past three years. As an outsider, I could also avoid home blindness and keep just right distance not to get naturalized by existing discourses that I was going to deconstruct (Neumann, 2008, pp. 63-65).

Last but not least, this study cannot find any one truth or essence of things because dreaming so is already doomed to failure, as the quote at the right beginning of this chapter urges. It will instead offer potential readers a critical gaze and knowledge so that they themselves can denaturalize the essentialized Arctic sooner or later.

## 4. CURRENT HISTORY OF THE ARCTIC

*“Let the North of the globe, the Arctic, become a zone of peace. Let the North Pole be a pole of peace” (Gorbachev, 1987)*

Before directly moving on to the analysis, the current history of the Arctic will be reviewed in order for us to grasp a framework in which the empirical materials of this study have occurred. Therefore, the aims of this chapter are, by studying previous literature in the field, to explore how today’s (more or less naturalized) understanding of the Arctic has come into being and what kind of changes in the discourse happened in the past. It will also refer to three recent counter discourses that are challenging the dominant view of the region. Since the Arctic has a long history, my examination here will be confined to shortly before and after the Cold War, and I will slightly emphasize Finnish, Russian, and to a lesser extent Singaporean involvement in it. It should not be forgotten, from a discourse theoretical point of view, that a growing number of publications to which I will refer in this chapter have also been influential participants in the Arctic making as a distinctive region as such.

### 4.1. Hegemonic Discourse

The major, if not paradigm, shift ensued in the Arctic when Mikhail Gorbachev, then General Secretary of the Communist Party in the Soviet Union, gave the Murmansk speech in 1987 (Keskitalo, 2004, pp. 42-44; Heininen and Nicol, 2007, p. 137; Åtland, 2008). Gorbachev (1987) created an opportunity to transform the Arctic into a zone of peace by proposing a number of initiatives such as a nuclear-free zone, scientific and environmental cooperation, and the development of natural resources and the shipping route in and around the North. As the Cold War discourse was weakening and the East-West division was thawing, the Arctic



could no longer be characterized as the strategic space which provided the shortest distance, in terms of navies, missiles, and early warning systems, between the two superpowers (Keskitalo, 2004, pp. 34-35). The Arctic became discursively empty again and needed to be rewritten with its own discourses although its material legacy such as nuclear submarines and military bases still remained. Gorbachev (1987) also seemed to widen the geographical definition of the area by mentioning “[t]he Arctic is not only the Arctic Ocean, but also the northern tips of three continents: Europe, Asia and America” and by using such ambiguous terms as “North” and “sub-Arctic”. This was significant because the Arctic used to be strongly associated with polar expedition and limited to a much narrower space around the High Arctic (Keskitalo, 2004, pp. 26-30).

The speech gave new opportunities to many actors who were previously thought of irrelevant to the region, and Finland was the first one to make a good use of it and launched in 1989 the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS) which was then adopted as a non-binding agreement by the A8 in 1991. According to Carina Keskitalo (2004, pp. 54-65), the AEPS was not very much about the Arctic, but something vague and general towards environmental protection having the Antarctic Treaty as a possible model in mind. The Arctic was not a familiar concept for Finland as well as for other Nordic states, and they traditionally did *not* even consider northern areas of their mainland as Arctic because of their much warmer climate and earlier civilization compared to that of Alaska and northern Canada (idem, pp. 42 & 145-147). What they could do then was only to conceive of the Arctic as a mirror of the Antarctica. The primary motivation for Finland behind the AEPS was instead to regain its distinctive position in the international arena and near itself to the West/Europe by widening the distance from Russia. The end of the Cold War necessitated Finland to reconstruct its identity, roles, and foreign policies because it could not work anymore as a mediator between the superpowers, and the newly envisioned Arctic by Gorbachev was exactly exploited for

that purpose (Keskitalo, 2004, pp. 54-65 & 157-158). This tendency of Finnish utilization of the North and the Arctic to become a fully northern *European* state appears to have continued to this day, as can be observed from its Northern Dimension initiative within the European Union (EU) (e.g. Ojanen, 1999; Heininen, 2014, pp. 103-106; see also Keskitalo, 2004, p. 61).

In contrast to Finland and others, Canada had already had significantly extensive knowledge and matured realization of the Arctic as a part of its national identity and, as a result, started to soon dominate the Arctic discourse in its early stage of development (Keskitalo, 2004, pp. 167-173). Canada imprinted three new moments: *frontier*, *indigenous people*, and *60°N* on the discourse, and the earlier environmental understanding of the Arctic was updated. The Canadian conceptualizations of the Arctic as a frontier above 60°N parallel where indigenous people live by subsistence economy was, therefore, generalized to the entire Arctic although this description does fit poorly to outside North America. The Arctic Council (AC) was then inaugurated in *Ottawa* in 1996, and Canada undoubtedly was the first country to chair it. The AEPS was incorporated into the AC, and indigenous people were given special right of active participation and full consultation as permanent participants (AC, 1996). That Canada had the strongest discursive power regarding the Arctic made it possible let other Arctic states *more or less* accept its own discourse (Keskitalo, 2004, pp. 168-169). Moreover, costs of being invested with the Canadian discourse was remarkably small for others because the AC was a non-binding forum and openly excluded military issues (AC, 1996) and also because they could automatically and *officially* become the leading *Arctic states* in the freshly constructed region as above 60°N line.

Russia made an impressive comeback to the Arctic when it started to lead the AC in 2004, planted its national flag on the seabed at the North Pole in 2007, and published its first Arctic strategy in the following year. Sergei Medvedev (2016) suggests that the Arctic has always

been important for Russia symbolically more so than materially. He further elaborates:

Once again, as so often in the past, the Russian Arctic stands as an empty space that the state utilizes for symbolic exercises of sovereignty. It is a locus for identity construction and the territorialization of the national myth, evoking stories of sacrifice and national greatness (2016).

This ‘Arctic as an empty place’ has been a recurring representation throughout centuries, and it has a similar connotation to the Canada’s frontier concept. Even in the 19th century, both Norwegian and Austro-Hungarian explores signified the Arctic in the same way so that they could positively legitimate their conquest and expansion to the North under the name of *science* (Spring and Schimanski, 2015, pp. 18-20). Figurative stories and pictures of Austro-Hungarian polar exploration were widely disseminated and received in its homeland “to negotiate issues of identity and modernity” (idem, 2015, p. 27). Perhaps, Russia’s flag planting at the North Pole can be said as a contemporary version of the past, as T-shirts that depicted the incident were produced and sold in tourist heaven in Moscow in order to enhance country’s Arctictness as a great power and stimulate domestic nationalism (Dittmer et al., 2011, p. 208). It is an interesting phenomenon that the Arctic has been the infinite source of symbolism for many for a long time, or putting it more aptly, many have signified the Arctic in such a manner to let it be a symbolic place.

Russia’s action, Vladimir Putin’s Munich speech, and a seminal paper by the U.S. Geological Survey in 2008, which confirmed abundance of natural resources in the Arctic, all contributed to revitalizing, though shortly, the old but enduring discourse of the Cold War. International media foresaw the advent of great conflict and fierce competition among the Arctic states to grab everything as much and early as possible in the region (Wilson Rowe, 2013, pp. 237-239). Russia was, of course, perceived as the first suspect to do so and as most threatening

(Wilson Rowe, 2013, pp. 237-239). However, concluding that Russia declared the war with other Arctic states by planting the flag is mistaken for a number of reasons. Above all, Russia together with other Arctic coastal states were the ones themselves who wanted to extinguish the burning fire by swiftly delivering the Ilulissat Declaration in which they firmly (re)confirmed its commitment to international law, i.e. United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), and responsible management of the Arctic Ocean (A5, 2008). In 2010, Norway and Russia even managed to agree the delimitation line of the Barents Sea, whose negotiations took more than 40 years, on *equal* terms (see Hønneland, 2014 for its detailed account). Guessing from the timing, I argue that this reconciliation was another attempt to strengthen the hegemonic line of discourse: ‘the Arctic is being managed flawlessly by the A5/A8’. Furthermore, the A8 has recently established the Arctic Coast Guard Forum amid diplomatic chill between Russia and the West. Teemu Palosaari (2012, p. 21) correctly stresses that “drawing similarities between the Cold War and the current [situation in the Arctic] is, to put it bluntly, stupid”. Nonetheless, it is still important to contemplate why the Arctic tends to be characterized as an unordered space, which leads directly to the next point.

According to Elana Wilson Rowe (2013, p. 239), the potential for Arctic conflict has often been highlighted, if not constructed, by *non-Arctic* players in order for them to create some loopholes in the dominant discourse. They want to obtain some chances to have a bigger say for the Arctic future by contending that the A8 is not doing what is supposed to do. On the other hand, the latter has strived to maintain the Arctic image as an *exceptional* region of *peace* and *cooperation*, as successive declarations of the AC manifest (Käpylä and Mikkola, 2015, pp. 8-10). The Arctic states can uphold the leading positions in the region by showing that they are doing their works rightly and justifiably. They seem to have little to gain and much to lose if they fight among themselves. Since “the Arctic as a zone of cooperation is a political construction that can always be dismantled” (Käpylä et al, 2016, p. 8), they have no

choice but continue to behave like Arctic states (in a sense of identification with the subject position) and to articulate their Arctictness or whatever it may be domestically and internationally if they wish to keep the hegemonic discourse alive. More importantly for this study, both dangerousness and peacefulness of the Arctic are believed to be anything but its essence.

As of today, people naturally regard without any doubt the A8 as being the so-called Arctic countries, whereas non-Arctic countries are not, which means this understanding of the Arctic currently holds a 'regime of truth' produced by the hegemonic discourse. Except a few scholarly studies such as Keskitalo (2004) and this thesis, it is hardly ever questioned why we refer Arctic states as 'Arctic states'. It is hard to think outside this box (discourse) because of its seeming objectiveness and naturalness. However, by repoliticizing and rehistoricizing the filling process of the empty signifier 'Arctic', it became known how the current Arctic states have come into being after the Gorbachev's speech. This subject position has been gradually institutionalized by a number of articulations such as the establishment of the AEPS, the AC, and the Arctic Coast Guard Forum, the delimitation agreement between Russia and Norway, Russia's flag planting, and speeches and declarations of various actors and organizations. Furthermore, the particular modes of representation of the Arctic, although still contested to some extent, have been adopted: the Arctic as a) frontier above 60°N parallel where indigenous people live by subsistence economy, b) exceptional region of peace and cooperation, and c) environmentally recognized area. Now, I will turn to counter discourses or other modes of representation which have been marginalized by the dominant discourse.

## 4.2. Globalizing Arctic

The Arctic as a *global* space has gained powerful momentum recently, and this is hard to

dismiss since many non-Arctic states such as Italy, Japan, and South Korea have shown their strong interests in the region, attained observership in the AC, and published Arctic strategy/policy papers not so long after the A8 has done so. Among others, Singapore seems to be an exceptionally interesting player because of its physically distanced location from the Arctic. Singapore's motivation to participate in Arctic-making allegedly originates from its anxiety to lose its established position as a global transport hub between the Middle East and East Asia via the Malacca Straits if the amount of shipping in the Arctic grows, as ice melts, in the future (Bennett, 2016b, p. 32). This is counter-argued by Chen Gang (2016, p. 214) who holds that the Arctic shipping routes cannot replace the southern one in the foreseeable future for the grounds that they leave still many uncertainties politically and environmentally and lack sufficient infrastructure. Nevertheless, Mia Bennett (2016b, pp. 32-33) and Gang (2016, pp. 214-215) agree that Singapore is trying to transform this little crisis into a huge opportunity by offering the Arctic states its sophisticated know-how and technology in the area of energy and transportation. As a matter of fact, Singapore is the largest producer of offshore oil rigs in the world and has already provided two self-made icebreakers to Russian oil company Lukoil (Bennett, 2016b, p. 33).

It would not be appropriate to regard this globalized Arctic as a *full* counter discourse because it is also employed by some Arctic states, particularly strongly by Iceland. The Arctic Circle, which I have touched upon at the right beginning of this paper, was an idea of Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson, former president of Iceland, to provide a platform where anyone including outsiders who have interests in the Arctic can participate and discuss their agendas. As its website proudly advertises it as “the largest *international* gathering on the Arctic” (Arctic Circle, 2017, emphasis by the author), its establishment has been significantly positively welcomed by non-Arctic states and others who used to have limited access to the hegemonic discourse, and approximately 2000 people from more than 40 countries participated in the

conference last October. Moreover, its supplementary event Arctic Circle Forum was held in Singapore in 2015 for the first time in Asia as if the Arctic had expanded till the equator.

Iceland is globalizing the Arctic supposedly for two motives. One has been to enhance its Arcticness and differentiate itself from other seven Arctic states by *leading* and *controlling* this globalization. It is therefore important for Iceland to continue to be the one who is globalizing the region, not others. Organizing Arctic Circle is a way of articulation to construct country's Arcticness and exercise it for real. Another has been to take the counter-measure against the A5 which has attempted to further privilege itself and isolate the Arctic from the rest of the globe. That the A5 organized its private meeting without prior consultation and issued the Ilulissat Declaration, in which it (re)endorsed its distinctive right as coastal states given by the UNCLOS, made the rest, i.e. Finland, Iceland, and Sweden (Arctic non-coastal states, hereinafter called A3), unhappy and skeptical towards solidarity of the A8 (Dodds, 2010, p. 71; Powell, 2010, p. 75). The A3 might have concerned that it would be left from the Arctic race if it would just stand by. Whether the tension between the A5 and the A3 will continue to escalate or not remains to be seen, but it is likely so because the former adopted, again independently, its own declaration concerning unregulated fishing in the central Arctic Ocean in 2015 (A5, 2015).

Besides Iceland and non-Arctic states, many others, for example indigenous people (Dodds, 2016), are also *globalizing* the Arctic for their own sake. In keeping with the theoretical perspective embraced in this thesis, we should not see the globalized Arctic as a completed object, but as ongoing processes of becoming (Shadian, 2016). Moreover, we must “investigate what work the term does, where it finds purchase and what responses it provokes, as various stakeholders deploy it” (Dodds, 2016). Whenever and wherever the term is triggered, it is not an innocent, but a full-fledged articulation to construct a certain Arctic.

### 4.3. Whose Arctic Is It?

Greenpeace, international environmental NGO, is leading and articulating a far more radical counter discourse that is ‘Arctic as common heritage of mankind’. It has gained tremendous support right across the globe, and no less than eight million people have so far signed its campaign ‘Save the Arctic’ which was launched in 2012 (Greenpeace, 2017). Its website enthusiastically advocates:

*People* power works. Together *we* helped force one of the world’s most powerful oil companies to leave the Arctic. Shell had billions of dollars and an army of lawyers but *we* had millions of passionate *people*. And together, *we won*. Every voice mattered. Each action worked. This incredible *victory* is a sign of hope. *We can win* this (Ibid. emphasis by the author).

The usage of ‘people’ and ‘we’ as subjects characterizes the discourse well. The Arctic is not for states nor for indigenous people, but is being saved by Greenpeace and its followers who are fighting for humanity. The campaign’s first goal is to have a global sanctuary implemented in the High Arctic where oil drilling and destructive fishing are banned, and the argument (no drilling in the Arctic) is backed by a study conducted by Christophe McGlade and Paul Ekins. They (2015, p. 187) have allegedly proved that fossil fuels in the Arctic must stay where they are in order to achieve the 2°C target promised by the Paris agreement.

In this counter discourse, a signifier ‘polar bear’ works as a nodal point, and Greenpeace has used it in many occasions to signify a deadly impact of human-caused climate change on the Arctic. For instance, one campaign video (Greenpeace, 2012) depicts a sad-looking and ‘homeless’ polar bear wandering in London to search for foods, and she then runs out of energy halfway. This can be interestingly contrasted with other polar bears. In the 19th century, Great Britain signified polar bears as “invincibility of the Arctic” (Spring and



Schimanski, 2015, p. 19) while Austria used images of them “dressed in European clothes or adopting Viennese ways of life [to symbolize] the subjugation of polar bears ... to Austrian rule” (ibid.). These findings are seamlessly in line with the earlier theoretical discussion. Discourse theory convinces that objects mean differently depending on discourses (e.g. environmental, exploitative, and Western scientific & rational) in which they are articulated.

Heather Exner-Pirot (2015) questions the ethics of Arctic Campaigning, while not denying the significance of climate change, by asking: What does the empty signifier ‘people’ signify? For whom Greenpeace is fighting and winning? Her point guides us to a third counter discourse that is ‘the Arctic should be governed by people who live there including non-indigenous populations’. Exner-Pirot (2015) doubts that Greenpeace together with those eight million people should be the ones who decide for the Arctic future and goes as far as to metaphorize the campaign as the second wave of Arctic colonization by outsiders (first was by states). She (2015) has a point, which is identified also by Palosaari (2012, p. 25), that local residents ultimately have the right to exploit emerging opportunities in the Arctic if they want to, and often they do (e.g. in Alaska, Greenland, and northern Canada).

This silence of Arctic locals, particularly non-indigenous people which account for approximately 90 percent of the whole population, is not something naturally happened, but has evolved out of contexts. They are effectively silenced because they have not been given any subject position and consequently agency in the dominant discourse (Keskitalo, 2004, p. 180). In other words, the entire inhabitants of the Arctic were deliberately reduced and relegated to the category of ‘indigenous’ when Canada implanted its own understanding of the Arctic and generalized it to the entire region (Keskitalo, 2004, pp. 154-155 & 158). This was perhaps convenient for Canada, as indigenous people indeed occupy the majority in Canadian Arctic, contrary to northern Europe, for example. From the normative point of view, Daria

Gritsenko (2016) might be right that a new discourse which entitles Arctic people to speak but not imposed by outsiders needs to unfold. However, it should be emphasized that this is easier said than done because the sign ‘local’ (as well as the ‘Arctic’) is an empty signifier onto which different parties compete fiercely to fill their own meanings and worldviews for their own sake. Ultimately, who locals are depends on how it is articulated in various discourses.

#### 4.4. Conclusion: Everlasting Struggles to Articulate the Arctic

Each and every time we refer to the Arctic, it means something. That ‘something’ might be the pristine environment which must be protected, the strategic area which must be militarized, the empty space which must be mastered, or the exceptionally peaceful region which must be respected. However, it does not signify everything. Using the term, otherwise, becomes in vain, and that what it means there exists discourses in society. We access to the Arctic through discourses whose structured totality, although contingent, simplifies certain people, places, and environments into a manageable unit called ‘Arctic’ while excluding others. Neumann (2008, p. 62) is right that discourse “constrains what is thought of at all, what is thought of as possible, and what is thought of as the ‘natural thing’ to do in a given situation”. The brief examination of the current history and both hegemonic and counter discourses have ironically shown the impossibility and problematique of spatializing the Arctic as a singularized and homogeneous region. The Arctic is always more complex and heterogeneous than certain discourses can possibly signify, and therefore excluded objects and subjects (e.g. locals, non-Arctic states, and environmental NGOs) have an imperative to resist to the dominant discourse and articulate their own Arctics in different ways. If this is the case, and I believe it is the case, the political battle of determining the essence and subjects of the Arctic will be the eternal feature of our society as long as speaking actors exist in this world.

## 5. ARCTIC DISCOURSES AND ARCTICNESS: CASE STUDY

This fifth chapter will present and discuss the result of my discourse analysis in the order of Russia, Finland, and Singapore. It is good to start with Russia and end with Singapore because the former and latter occupy the highest (A5) and lowest (non-Arctic states) subject positions of the hegemonic Arctic discourse respectively. Going along this order, hence, will create gradation in terms of how (discursively) powerful they have been in the region. On the basis of the two research questions (please see p. 9), the chief focus of my text examination was to deconstruct and denaturalize the Arctic discourses of my research targets and reveal how Arcticness had been articulated in them. Analysis of 74 texts collected was further assisted by the tailor-made and theoretically-informed checklist (please see p. 31) for the study. After displaying and explaining each country in detail, I will summarize major features and characteristics of their discourses and Arcticness into a table in the last section. There, the three cases will be compared and contrasted to conclude the chapter with some final thought.

### 5.1. Russia

Being a member of the A5, Russia has been a core contributor to the maturation of the hegemonic discourse, but it and kind of an Arctic that Russia wants to spatialize have not necessarily been identical since the former is also an articulation of all other Arctic states, indigenous people, and beyond. Analysis below will illustrate to what extent and in what aspects Russia managed to reorient and at the same time had to accept the way to which the hegemonic discourse was heading. It will also shed light on how Russian Arcticness has been articulated in its discourse which centers on the five nodal points, namely *economy*, *peacefulness*, the *A5*, the *AC*, and *regionalness*, and plus some other smaller but equally significant moments. As a reminder, all signs which are positioned in discourses are called

moments while nodal points are those privileged ones around which other moments are linked and ordered to acquire their meanings. Without question, each nodal point has functioned to bring particular subjects, objects, and futures into the (Russian) Arctic.

A significant opportunity had arrived for Russia to impact on making of the Arctic discourse when the country took over the chairmanship of the AC from Iceland for the first time in 2004. During its chairmanship, Sergey Lavrov, Minister of Foreign Affairs, stated in front of Federation Council members in Moscow:

[T]he priorities of most Arctic Council participants [were] ecology and environment protection. Russia, holding the Chairmanship for the current two years, [would] retain these priorities, of course. We [could not] depart from the previously adopted decisions and we [were] ourselves interested in improving the environment of the Northern and Arctic areas. But we [had] already supplemented these decisions with our own priorities, which [were] directed precisely towards social and economic development (2005a).

It appears from this quote that it was Russia that embedded a new moment 'economy' into the dominant discourse, whose tradition continues to this day, as the Arctic Economic Council has recently been established. However, this is wrong for the reason that economy existed as the moment under sustainable development already when the AC was inaugurated in 1996 (AC, 1996, p. 2). It is, therefore, more appropriate to say that Russia was the one who unquestionably upgraded the status of economy from the moment to the nodal point and scalded down the importance of environment to a certain degree in the discourse. By being the nodal point, the sign 'economy' is signified directly by the empty signifier 'Arctic' whilst in the past it was signified through other nodal points such as 'environment' and 'sustainable development'. As Lavrov (2005a) himself admitted, writing a completely new Arctic space which excludes environment was not possible because of the existing discourse that limited what Russia could say about the region.

Likewise, another moment ‘indigenous people’ of the central discourse is given less significance in the Russia’s Arctic understanding. Although Russia articulates it in every text, it does not really signify anything and rather situates independently of other moments in the discourse. This is nothing surprising if we consider the situation that a ratio of indigenous people to the overall population is much smaller in Russia than in Canada (Keskitalo, 2004, p. 144). The reason why Russia still talks about indigenous people seems to be again the presence of the hegemonic discourse on which new articulations need to be build. This has become a sort of inertia and convention when talking about the Arctic. Less emphasis on indigenous people together with the fact that non-indigenous local people have not been given any agency in the dominant discourse (Keskitalo, 2004, p. 180) suggests that human aspects of the Arctic are largely neglected in the Russia’s Arctic construction.

Russia’s intensive focus on economy accelerates in later years, and it becomes even clearer that environment takes a subordinate position to the former. As Russian president Vladimir Putin underlines at the plenary session of the Third International Arctic Forum ‘The Arctic – A Territory of Dialogue’:

[A] new chapter in the Arctic’s history has opened now, what we could call *an era of industrial breakthrough*, a time of rapid economic and infrastructure development.

It is absolutely clear now that the climate is changing. Everyone is talking about this. *What is causing this change is not so important now*. What matters is that it is happening. It is clear now that the northern latitudes can be open for shipping for 100 days or perhaps 150 days, and that new regions are opening up for economic activity (2013, emphasis by the author).

These statements (see also Lavrov, 2008a; Lavrov, 2008b; Medvedev, 2008; Putin, 2014a; Putin, 2014b) have activated a particular present and future of the Arctic where industrial breakthrough is and *must be* happening in order for Russia to take advantage of emerging

economic opportunities including but not limited to natural resource exploitation and opening of the new shipping lanes that are the moments attached to the nodal point 'economy'. Putin (2013) embodies, by words, the realness and immediacy of climate change which is anything but easy to feel, especially outside the Arctic, even when much statistical data has indicated the changes numerically and theoretically.

Putin (2013) constructs an arbitral connection between climate change and economy by articulating that the advancement of the former *naturally* leads to more economic activities in the area. This does not have to be necessarily so because the latter additionally requires a tough political will and supports to actually open the Arctic, and a choice can always be made not to do so in order, for example, to realize the Paris Agreement. This second option has, however, effectively been erased in the Russia's Arctic discourse. Furthermore, a high likelihood or so-called 'the Arctic Paradox' (Palosaari, 2012, pp. 24-25) that burning fossil fuels which are found in the Arctic could further accelerate the global warming which has made these resources available in the first place has not been correctly recognized in the discourse. This exploitative approach towards the Arctic will most likely to endure, as Putin (2014b, emphasis by the author) asserts that "you and I, we understand that humanity *has to work* in the Arctic; it *is forced to develop* these territories. Given this understanding, we should not allow any mistakes ... Since we understand that we *have to work there and develop* these territories, we should do this in a professional manner". Even though texts occasionally reflected the country's earlier "thoughtless and consumerist" (Putin, 2014b) attitude towards and understanding of the Arctic as "a depository of raw materials and biospheric resources" (Lavrov, 2005b) with some regret, alternative models and pictures have not yet been uttered whatsoever. Developing and exploiting the Arctic consumptively and materially seems, therefore, to be a must not an option for Russia for the time being.

Apart from economy, the year 2008 has been a major turning point in the Russian Arctic discourse on the ground that there have emerged several new nodal points whose roles are still important and huge today. First and foremost, the nodal point ‘peacefulness’ has jumped to the forefront of the discourse and started to be articulated in every single speech. This timing was reasonable when considering the circumstances at that time, as I already mentioned in the previous chapter, that the opposing idea (though not the level of discourse in my opinion) of the Arctic as a geopolitical battle ground for resources was gaining some momentum in and around the region. Such an idea popped up, according to Juha Kämpylä and Harri Mikkola (2015, pp. 6-7), because Russia planted its national flag into the North Pole seabed in 2007 and the abundance of region’s hydrocarbon reserves was scientifically reported by the U.S. Geological Survey in 2008 and also because non-Arctic players who were not entitled any subject positions wanted to seize the opportunity to delegitimize the hegemonic discourse (Wilson Rowe, 2013, p. 239). Competing claims by the A5 over their extended continental shelves, different legal interpretations of the Northwest Passage by Canada and the U.S.A., and the dispute of maritime border between Norway and Russia were outlined as possible sources of conflicts by Borgerson (2008), prominent proponent of such a view, in his article appropriately named as ‘Arctic Meltdown’.

Nevertheless, owing to the extensive discursive efforts, i.e. articulatory practices, by the Arctic states including Russia, this burning fire was extinguished immediately, and the region’s peacefulness has been remarkably and repeatedly emphasized since then (see also Lavrov, 2008a; 2009a; 2010; 2011; Putin, 2013):

I want to say that practical activities of the *Arctic Council*, which we have consistently sought to strengthen, debunk every prognosis that the Arctic is becoming a potential source of conflict. Such has *never* been, nor will *ever* be, the case (Lavrov, 2009b, emphasis by the author).

The Arctic region is becoming an example for many others, unfortunately, less peaceful regions. We have *no doubts* that the future of the Arctic region will define notions like *peace*, sustainable development, close *cooperation* and strong *Arctic Council*. Let us work with this view (Lavrov, 2013, emphasis by the author).

Arctic countries, members of the *Arctic Council*, determine *cooperation* rules in the Arctic. When we meet during this forum, no one mentions any conflicts or talks about confrontation. Everyone is interested in developing this region on the basis of *cooperation*, respect for *international law* (Lavrov, 2014, emphasis by the author).

Russia has *always* considered the Arctic as a territory of mutually respectful dialogue (Lavrov, 2016a, emphasis by the author).

Speculation is rife in foreign countries regarding the militarisation of the Arctic. I would like to note in this regard that Russia does not see any challenges in that area that would have a military dimension. Russia will continue to oppose any attempts to portray the region as an area of future conflict, and intends, for its part, to promote the idea of the Arctic as a territory of *peace* and *cooperation* (Titov, 2016, emphasis by the author).

These verbal proclamations have made it difficult, if not impossible, to imagine the Arctic as something other than an exceptionally peaceful region (Käpylä and Mikkola, 2015, pp. 6-10). It even appears that the Arctic has at all times been pacific although it was anything but peaceful during the Cold War (before Gorbachev made the Murmansk speech) and may become disordered again in the future. This specific Arctic has been articulated not only by linguistic, but also by non-linguistic practices (Laclau and Mouffe, 2001, p. 109; Hansen, 2006, pp. 19-20; see also Lavrov, 2008a) such as the foundation of the AC itself (another nodal point) in which biannual ministerial meeting and cooperative activities have taken place and the invention of the AC's flag which was also planted at the North Pole together with the flags of all the Arctic states in April 2013 (Lavrov, 2013), just to name a few. Seemingly, many Russia's articulations regarding the Arctic have been meant to signify this nodal point 'peacefulness' so as to strengthen the subject position called 'Arctic state' as a transparent, reliable, and predictable (Lavrov, 2009a) ruler of the region.



What is more, a moment ‘international law’ (Lavrov, 2008a; 2009a; 2009b; 2010; 2011; 2013; Putin, 2013; 2014a) has performed to further signify the Arctic as a place full of peacefulness. Lavrov (2013, emphasis by the author) boasts that “[w]e are convinced that all the issues not settled in the Arctic region – and their number reduces – will be resolved by the Arctic countries based on the *existing* and *rather sufficient* international and legal basis and, of course, good will”. The moment, firstly, denotes that the Arctic is an orderly space where conflicts as such are unthinkable. This has been evidenced by, according to Lavrov (2011), the diplomatic agreement between Russia and Norway in 2010 regarding the maritime delimitation line in the Barents Sea. Secondly, it implicitly refutes the necessity of a new Arctic Treaty which is a part of the counter discourse by Greenpeace and others. Since international law already sufficiently exists, there is no need for the new treaty that transcends the former. Current international law is obviously better for the Arctic *coastal* states for the reason that it gives them certain prerogatives to govern the most part of the Arctic Ocean including continental shelves beyond their Exclusive Economic Zones. Hence, it is highly important for the A5 to stick to it discursively as firm as possible.

Since 2008, this ‘A5’ has also been the nodal point of the Russia’s Arctic discourse, which is particularly related to the manifestation of country’s Arcticness. As Lavrov claims at the A5’s exclusive meeting held for the first time in Ilulissat in 2008:

The idea to meet in such a format appears to us both *justified* and *timely*. The states whose shores are washed by the Arctic Ocean have something to discuss.

[T]hose of us who have an outlet to the Arctic Ocean bear *special responsibility*.

For us, as for the other conference participants, *the Arctic is not an abstract geographical notion. A considerable portion of our territories lies in the Arctic zone. And Russia itself as well is a significant part of the Arctic* (2008a, emphasis by the author).

Why was the meeting justified and timely in their opinion? Although it remains a matter of speculation, the A5 perhaps wanted to distinguish itself from the A3 (Arctic non-coastal states) in order to maintain a tighter grip on the Arctic discourse, and it was necessary at that time, as more and more countries around the globe started to pay attention towards the Arctic. From the fear to become a *normal* Arctic country, the coastal states have vested themselves with the new subject position called ‘A5’ which allegedly possesses *more Arcticness* and hence *special* responsibility for the region. This privilege is further promised by existing international law. The third quote above is expressly interesting because it sounds that the Arctic is just an abstract concept for entities other than the A5.

However, it seems that the A5 has not yet managed to become a recognized and legitimate nodal point in the hegemonic discourse (even though it is so in the Russian Arctic discourse) after continuously receiving strong criticisms from unwelcomed parties, namely the A3 and indigenous peoples’ organizations (Dodds, 2010, pp. 71-72). Its future remains to be seen and apparently depends on the A5 itself. Among others, at least Russia has clearly expressed its willingness to continue this format in parallel with the AC:

The main conclusion after this [second] meeting of the five Arctic Ocean coastal states is that the “Quintet” has every right to exist as an informal arrangement under which the five states discuss issues relating to their *special responsibility* for the state of affairs in the region ... This does not mean that *the Arctic Council, broader in composition and including Sweden, Finland and Iceland*, is somehow restricted. Certainly not. ... But the Arctic Quintet, the countries with coastlines on the Arctic Ocean and a continental shelf, bears a *special responsibility* (Lavrov, 2010).

Speaking of our partners in the Arctic, there is *the Arctic Council* that comprises the five Arctic littoral states and *three of their neighbours* (Lavrov, 2016b, emphasis by the author).

The A5 has been, both implicitly and explicitly, articulated in many other speeches as well

(e.g. Lavrov, 2009a; Medvedev, 2011; Putin, 2013; Lavrov, 2015; Lavrov, 2016a). These texts suggest that Russia has used the two nodal points 'A5' and 'AC' properly, according to contexts and situations in its discourse, so as not to outrage the A3 excessively, but has not still given up prioritizing the former if some chance arises in the future. More importantly for my argument, Russia cannot stop articulating the AC because it is so tightly linked to other nodal points and moments such as economy, peacefulness, regionalness, and cooperation in the hegemonic discourse. Russia, at the same time, wants to articulate it as well to avoid the situation to signify the A3 as Arctic states ( $\neq$  AC). By doing this way, there leaves a slight but strategic possibility that only the A5 becomes true Arctic states in the future symbolically at the least.

Except for claiming to have the lengthy coastline along the Arctic Ocean, Russia has seldom voiced the source of country's Arcticness in its texts. It is probably because Russia confidently believes that its geographical location makes it obvious enough why Russia is an Arctic state, or might be that it has nothing to add anymore. One notable exception is when Lavrov (2008a) tells that his country is proud of its rich experience concerning Arctic development and pioneering. That Russia reached the oceanic floor (and planted its flag) at the North Pole in 2007 and two fellow compatriots walked to there during the polar night in 2008 are taken by Lavrov as recent proudful achievements (2008a). From this, it appears that these two performances were used, if not originally intended, to enhance Russia's Arcticness. It is not crystal clear whether Russia wants to define the Arctic only as the Ocean or as the territory above 66°N parallel, as also the latter is mentioned twice by Putin (2013; 2014b). What is clear, however, is that the Arctic as above 60°N line has not even been an option, and the Russian Arctic appears somewhat smaller than how it is constructed in the today's hegemonic discourse shared by the A8. This is ironic in a sense that the leader of the former Soviet Union was the one who made the opportunity to broaden the region and let others such

as Finland participate in spatialization of the Arctic (Gorbachev, 1987). In any case, the geographical factor alone seems to be enough for Russia to proclaim that “[it] is a major Arctic power” (Putin, 2013) today at this point in Arctic history.

The last nodal point is ‘regionalness’ which has been scattered around all over the texts and supported by other nodal points and moments, particularly the AC. The major mission of this nodal point has been to efficiently silence the counter discourse ‘globalizing Arctic’ which offers alternative and radical pictures of how to geographize the Arctic. The Russia’s discourse has been against, though sometimes softly, both non-Arctic states and Greenpeace:

In conditions of the rapid increase of attention to the Arctic Council in the world, which is a natural process, it is important *to fix a correct balance between the regional identity of the organization* and the use of the possibilities of cooperation *with extra-regional partners* (Lavrov, 2009a, emphasis by the author).

[AC] guarantees the rights of *regional* countries, so that they can work out the rules of *regional* cooperation and those for the safe and frugal use of the *region's* colossal resources (Lavrov, 2014, emphasis by the author).

The council also decided that we would not isolate ourselves from other countries, *but neither would we make the Arctic the common property of mankind as certain parties wish*. By preserving the responsibility of the eight Arctic member-states of the Arctic Council, we are open for interaction and are ready to admit observers. Our only condition is that they will *only be observers* and will only be involved in Arctic Council projects that have been coordinated by the permanent members (Lavrov, 2015, emphasis by the author).

The rather redundant use of the adjective ‘regional’ (and the avoidance of using ‘global’) implies that Russia has been feeling anxious about the counter discourse(s) which may repaint and refill the empty signifier ‘Arctic’ dramatically differently someday. Even though individual speeches do not actively and directly attack the antagonists, the aggregation of texts clearly show Russia’s discursive efforts to keep and further hegemonize the hegemonic

discourse which promises the state the highest and most powerful subject position in regard to Arctic politics. The only way for Russia to let its own Arctic live as permanent as possible is never to stop articulating and rearticulating the nodal points; 'economy', 'peacefulness', 'A5', 'AC', and 'regionalness' and the moments; 'natural resource', 'shipping', 'cooperation', and 'international law', whose totality is indeed the Russian Arctic discourse. Otherwise, it will fade away into the past, as nothing including the Arctic is essential and permanent in this world (Laclau and Mouffe, 2001).

## 5.2. Finland

Finland was the forerunner to fill then the discursively empty Arctic with the launch of the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS) soon after Gorbachev gave his Murmansk speech in 1987. The prime motivation for the country behind the project was not to sell others its own Arctic as such since it did not simply have it (Keskitalo, 2004, pp. 42 & 145-147).

Rather, it was to create whatever a space in which Finland could assert its (northern) Europeanness and at the same time coexist with Russia peacefully (Keskitalo, 2004, pp. 54-65 & 157-158). Later, although a baton to articulate the hegemonic Arctic discourse was passed, if not seized, by firstly Canada and then others such as Russia and Norway, Finland was fortunate enough to continue to be an Arctic state, thanks to the historical context, the demise of the Soviet Union, and the Canadian understanding of the Arctic as above 60°N parallel.

Unlike Canada and Russia, for the country which does not possess the Arctic coastline and used not to consider its own territory as Arctic, there has required extra discursive efforts to legitimize and maintain its privileged subject position on the dominant discourse. Exactly because of its unconfidence, Finnish Arcticness has been articulated to construct its Arcticness almost in every text. This tendency has been even stronger since around 2008 when global

attention towards the region started to expand. There would have been no reason for Finland to speak it out and say it loud if it had self-evidently been the Arctic country. Finnish Arcticness has been signified in its Arctic discourse in three aspects, namely geography, history, and technology, and they together are called as “snow-how” (Soini, 2016a) to further emphasize its Arctic identity.

In terms of *geography*, Sauli Niinistö and Timo Soini, current President of Finland and Minister for Foreign Affairs respectively, have claimed:

We woke up to it in Finland much later. But we are definitely wide awake now. Finland is not an Arctic coastal state. But Finland is an Arctic country. In fact, it is one of the world's most northerly countries. Of all the people living above the 60th parallel north, every third person is a Finn (Niinistö, 2012).

Helsinki, the capital of Finland, is located on the 60<sup>th</sup> parallel, and it is as high in the north as Anchorage (Soini, 2016a).

We Finns regard the whole of Finland as an Arctic country. One third of Finland lies above the Arctic Circle, but our Northern geography has always shaped Finnish culture, our way of life and our destinies. Historically speaking Finland is the northernmost place in Europe where the western and eastern civilizations met over a thousand years ago (Soini, 2016b).

It was tactically told that Finland was just hibernating at the backstage so as to hide the fact that it was indeed a recent newcomer to the Arctic. In keeping with the dominant discourse, Finland has implicitly adopted the 60°N line to demarcate the Arctic from elsewhere. This definition might have been *politically* correct and feasible, as a strategic compromise between the A8. However, it might have been *climatically* and *socially* wrong because Helsinki and other Arctic cities in North America such as Anchorage share quite different characteristics, for example the ratio of indigenous people, even though they all locate at or above the 60°N parallel. It is also highly doubtful whether people in southern Finland identify themselves

somehow with the Arctic. These manifest the problematique and impossibility of defining wide and diversified areas as a singularized space called 'Arctic' (Keskitalo, 2004). The real implications and consequences of such simplification are yet to be seen.

The second source of Finnish Arcticness is, believe it or not, *history*. "Finland's involvement in the Arctic dates far back into history. We remember the legendary Finnish-born Adolf Nordenskjöld, the first captain to navigate the North East passage on his ship Vega" (Väyrynen, 2008; see also Stubb, 2010; Torstila, 2011; Laajava, 2011). Nordenskjöld whose name can be translated as the "defender of the North" (Stubb, 2010) was born in Helsinki in 1832 which was then under the Russian Empire. He was forced to move to Sweden due to his political activities and spent most of his scientific career there. Nevertheless, according to Af Forselles (n.d.), Nordenskjöld kept his Finnish identity close to his heart through old ties of family and friends, and his scientific achievements such as maps and other geographical works were left to the University of Helsinki after his death, which fortunately and coincidentally have been articulated to form the major basis of his motherland's Arcticness today. He conducted many other successful expeditions as well at various Northern locations such as Spitzbergen and Greenland besides crossing the Arctic from Europe to Asia in 1878-1879. For Finland, Nordenskjöld seems to be a true Arctic hero with which it can and has asserted that "we have a *primordial* interest towards Arctic issues" (Stubb, 2009, emphasis by the author).

By contrast, what was entirely missing from the Finnish texts was the fact that the county once had a corridor to the Arctic Ocean through the area called Petsamo. The size of Petsamo was 10,000 km<sup>2</sup>, and it was located along the eastern side of the current Russian-Norwegian border. Active silence on Petsamo in the discourse is noteworthy because it could have been signified to appeal Finnish inner Arcticness even though it was part of the country only for 25

years between 1920 and 1944. I suggest that Finland has chosen not to articulate the sign ‘Petsamo’ on the ground that doing so can be counterproductive to its desire to expand the Arctic towards south. To rely on seashore, which the country does not currently have, could turn out badly to give the Arctic coastal states more power and legitimacy in the region.

Technology makes up the last portion of Finnish ‘snow-how’. It is also a nodal point of the discourse, and I will shortly come back to this point later. Finland has been forced to develop technology related to ice and winter shipping because of its geographical location and climate which freezes all of its harbors in winter (Torstila, 2011; Niinistö, 2012). Pertti Torstila (2011), then Secretary of State, comments at the Arctic Frontiers that “[w]e are the only country in the world experiencing such a dramatic limitation to seafaring and yet shipping continues at all our harbors uninterrupted all year round”. As its evidence, Finland today produces approximately two thirds of world’s icebreakers (Niinistö, 2013a). Moreover, these technology and Arctic know-how have been articulated as Finland’s “national pride” (Halinen, 2011) and “lifeline” (Niinistö, 2012). I argue that this last component which is a relatively less static concept compared to geography and history (although nothing is permanent discursively) has been indispensable for Finland to complete the construction of its Arcticness because the first two points might have been too weak for the country which lacks direct access to the Arctic Ocean. Anyhow, when these three sources are combined, Finland “has a *natural* interest and contribution to make in the Arctic” (Laajava, 2011, emphasis by the author) and “is clearly to be defined as an Arctic country” (Niinistö, 2013a). On top of them, publication of the Arctic strategy (Torstila, 2011) and possession of the Saami (Torstila, 2011; Laajava, 2011) have been uttered to supply extra Arcticness.

Having texts examined closely, it becomes apparent that Finland is not only speaking as an Arctic state, but also as a Nordic country and an EU member state when talking about the



Arctic. In other words, Finland is taking the three subject positions simultaneously in its Arctic discourse, and these 'Nordic' and 'EU' are indeed its central nodal points. Their roles are to bring a whole different set of moments and deliberately connect them to a kind of an Arctic which Finland wants to spatialize. For example, as Erkki Tuomioja, then Foreign Minister, says at a conference on 'Sustainable Development in the Arctic':

Thus addressing the challenge of *sustainable development* will be the (crucial) *litmus test for the success or failure of the Nordic model*. And it will be particularly in the Arctic High North where we will be closely observed and judged on *how well our model works in addressing the challenges and opportunities we are facing in the Arctic* (Tuomioja, 2014a, emphasis by the author; see also Tuomioja, 2014b).

It is interesting that Finland is striving to construct an Arctic where the Nordic model and values, for example social cohesion and justice, gender equality, and democracy, can and should be tested, exerted, and promoted (Tuomioja, 2014a; Tuomioja, 2014b; see also Stubb, 2009; Laajava, 2011; Tuomioja, 2012). We should not forget that what the sign 'Nordic' signifies also changes and depends on discourses in which it resides and who articulates it. In the above case, it is closely linked to the signifier 'sustainable development' that is the forth nodal point of the Finnish Arctic discourse. Here, a firm chain has been established between the three signifiers, namely 'Arctic', 'Nordic', and 'sustainable development', in order to visualize a particular (Finnish) Arctic.

Finland is equally keenly eager to institutionalize the EU profile in the Arctic discourse:

Finland will act to convert the *indisputable Arctic vocation* of the EU into a more specific and stronger EU Arctic policy (Stubb, 2010, emphasis by the author).

The European Union is an *indispensable* part of the equation (Tuomioja, 2015, emphasis by the author).

[T]he EU is *particularly* well-placed to contribute to Arctic governance. It is a trustworthy and predictable actor (Tuomioja, 2015, emphasis by the author).

Finland regards the European Union as a *central* Arctic actor (Soini, 2016b, emphasis by the author).

In nearly every speech, the EU has been connoted as a vital subject for the region, and it can also be shown from the fact that a whole chapter is devoted to it in the country's first Arctic strategy published in 2010. This seems to be a continuation of the Finnish propensity from the past to discursively exploit the empty signifier 'Arctic' to increase its Europeanness on top of its Nordicness and Arcticness. At the same time, EU's identity as an Arctic subject has been made and remade by Finland's articulations. Several identity-makings are, hence, complexly and purposefully intertwined in the Finnish Arctic discourse. The other side of the coin is that the state has been trying to construct a sort of an Arctic where it can project these identities, as space construction and identity making always go hand in hand. Whether this multiplicity is something specific to Finland or not can be known only when this is compared to other Arctic discourses of Denmark and Sweden which also belong to the Nordic and EU families.

A fifth nodal point is the AC which has been articulated as a pivot of multilateral Arctic governance in the Finland's Arctic discourse. This is no wonder. However, what is particularly unique is that the AC has been pronounced as if it were and should be an international (not regional) organization. This and a sixth nodal point 'globalness' have helped each other to underline how significant the Arctic is for the wider global community:

Under the present chairmanship of Finland the Arctic Council has acquired the role as the international mouthpiece of the Arctic, particularly in the UN context (Tuomioja, 2002).

[T]he future of the Arctic is not only of concern to some states but a legitimate concern for all (Stubb, 2009).

We need to further strengthen the Arctic Council as a “global” forum for enhancing the international governance of Arctic issues (Stubb, 2009).

I have proposed to consider making the Council a fully fledged international organization. We may not all of us be ready for this right now, but inescapably we are already moving to that direction (Tuomioja, 2013).

The Arctic region is a microcosm of our globalising world and its importance is growing all the time (Soini, 2015).

In addition to the above, other quite a few moments have been articulated to reinforce the nodal point ‘globalness’ in the discourse, for example “the World Summit on Sustainable Development” (Stenlund, 2001), “the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals” (Soini, 2016b), “the Paris Climate Agreement” (Soini, 2016c), and the UN itself. Finland also has been a leading advocate of granting AC’s observership to non-Arctic players, particularly to the EU. Combining these globally connoted signifiers which are not seemingly related to the Arctic makes it impossible to regard this region as anything other than a global space. Therefore, Finnish contribution to globalization of the Arctic in the hegemonic discourse cannot and will not be overestimated in the past and future.

Why on earth does Finland want to globalize the Arctic even though it is entitled the favored subject position in Arctic politics? One reason could be, as I have argued in the chapter four with the case of Iceland, to prevent the Arctic from becoming a closed and private space for the Arctic coastal states. Globalization is a counter discursive strategy against them. Another motive, which is just as reasonable, would be not to halt the never-ending “process of becoming” (Campbell, 1992, p. 11) a state called ‘Finland’. By globalizing the Arctic, Finland can assert and at the same time construct its globalness as one layer of country’s identity. On a similar note, it can project and at the same time essentialize its Nordicness and Europeaness as layers of country’s identity by Nordicizing and Europeanizing the Arctic. It appears to be

strategically unavoidable for a small state like Finland to exploit a certain space in multiple ways for its identity making so that it can be distinctive in international politics. Enhancing globalness, Europeanness, and Nordicness might be more meaningful and important than simply constructing Arcticness for the country which traditionally was not familiar with it.

The nodal point ‘sustainable development’ is a sign which different entities have competed to signify in different manners to advance their agenda and maximize their interests (Waas et al., 2011, p. 1656). It has, more often than not, been used around the world to conveniently hide negative consequences of economic development on environment (Waas et al., 2011, p. 1657). This is not the case in the Finnish Arctic discourse, as three moments ‘economy’, ‘society’, and ‘environment’ have been given nearly equal significance under it. At a seminar, Tuomioja (2012, emphasis by the author) states that “[t]o be able to understand the Arctic region and the fundamental transformation there, we need to view it from *as broad perspective as possible*, taking into account not only the natural resources and transport routes but also the *environment and the people*”. Pollutants such as mercury, Poly Chlorinated Biphenyl, and Persistent Organic Pollutants were major signified of ‘environment’ at the right beginning of the century. Later (from 2006 onwards), it has been mainly climate change. In terms of ‘society’, a remarkably wide selection of actors from locals to private companies and from regional governments to international organizations have been given agency in the Finnish Arctic. Therefore, subjects are not limited to the Arctic states and indigenous people, as in the hegemonic discourse.

That economic opportunities have not received special treatment can also be verified from the fact that the ‘Arctic paradox’ has not been entirely ignored in the discourse, as Tuomioja (2014a; see also Tuomioja, 2006) reminds that “[w]e have to bear in mind, however, that the reason why we all expect these goodies to be delivered, is a bad one – climate change”.

Moreover, designation of environmental protection zones *through global regulation* within which economic activities are forbidden have been proposed for several times (Tuomioja, 2013; Tuomioja, 2014a; 2014b; 2014c). The primary target seems to be the High Seas around the North Pole. Stubb (2009) has even called these areas the common heritage of mankind (a few years before Greenpeace started the campaign!) and hinted the country's will to object to the A5's Ilulissat Declaration which advocates their special rights to do business there.

Finland has doubted also the adequacy of current international law, which gives the coastal states great advantage over Arctic governance, for coping with the new situation and shown its readiness to enact a new international regulation, agreement, or treaty whenever necessary (Tuomioja, 2012; 2014a; 2014b; Soini, 2016a). There seems to be no reason for Finland to support the A5, as the country cannot have a direct stake in the Arctic Ocean in any way.

That being said, 'economy' is still the moment of the discourse ( $\neq$  element), which means that it is not an alternative for Finland just to stand by and miss emerging business opportunities in the North. As a landlocked Arctic country, enlarging the region further south seems to be a top discursive priority. Niinistö (2014a) claims at the State Dinner in Ottawa that "it is not only the sea areas that matter. Many of the northern and Arctic opportunities lie on land". Land-related economic prospects such as minerals (zinc, nickel, and iron), railways, and tourism have, therefore, been unmistakably underlined apart from shipping and fossil fuels. Whether intended or not, people's perception of what and where the Arctic is alternates when Finland articulates in this fashion. Technology, which was the first nodal point introduced in this section as one pillar of Finnish Arcticness, has been signified to be solely in charge of realizing sustainable development. "Sweden and Finland are both Arctic countries. We may not own the oil and the gas, but we have much of the Arctic technology and know-how needed to exploit these giant economic opportunities" (Niinistö, 2012b). The discourse even sounds that Finnish icy technology and Finland itself have been and will be the last bastion to

economically conquer the Arctic while not destroying it socially and environmentally.

Last but not least, the Arctic as a zone of exceptional peace has been refuted in the Finland's Arctic discourse. It has been articulated just as an ordinary region which is affected by collision of interests internally and externally:

Cooperative instincts are predominant but there is also potential for discord. ... The blend of significant economic prospects and unresolved territorial issues is a difficult mix (Stubb, 2009).

The crisis in Ukraine, however, has inevitably also led to questions on how it could affect Arctic cooperation. It will not be in anyone's interest to let the crisis bring new obstacles for the kind of pragmatic cooperation on environmental, social and economic issues which has benefited all the member states and the people living on the Arctic (Tuomioja, 2014c).

The question is often asked, whether Arctic cooperation can remain immune to rising international tensions. This is an understandable question. Of course, the risk of a spill-over must be taken into consideration (Soini, 2016b).

Although 'cooperation' still works as an important moment, its discursive significance has to some extent declined after the Ukraine crisis. Even moments like 'security' and 'military' have started to pop up recently. However, this is not because Finland wants to disorder the region and bring the past East-West division again therein. I suggest that it is because Finland can have 'more work to do' as a cooperation-maker (for example, through a Nordic context) by intentionally leaving some room for improvement to attain perfect cooperation. Soini (2015) believes that it was exactly the 'Finns' that initiated and fostered Arctic cooperation immediately when doing so became possible with the Gorbachev's speech. Furthermore, with exceptional peacefulness, it would be more challenging to globalize (expand) the Arctic and welcome outside actors such as the EU and international organizations. There would be simply no need for them if everything goes perfectly and peacefully with the A5/A8.

Overall, the Finland's Arctic discourse, which rotates around the six nodal points, namely 'technology', 'Nordic', 'EU', 'sustainable development', 'AC', and 'globalness', can best be summarized as miscellaneous and multidimensional in terms of both objects and subjects. The scope of the discourse, i.e. the number of moments signified by the nodal points, has been immensely extensive and almost boundless. This unfocusedness makes us feel that it signifies everything, but at the same time nothing. Some might argue that it is because Finland just does not know what to speak when it comes to the Arctic. This is half true. However, I would add that letting 'Arctic' signify as many moments as possible is exactly what Finland wants. This is the strategic choice made to exercise and develop its identity such as Europeanness and Nordicness while constructing its emerging Arcticness. If this is the case, and I believe it is the case, Finland will continue to be 'discursively' smart player in the Arctic in years to come. The main characteristics of the discourse are summarized once more in the Table 2 (p. 77) in order to compare it with Russia's and Singapore's Arctic articulations.

### 5.3. Singapore

Singapore started to engage with the Arctic as early as in 2009, but its official debut internationally was when Sam Tan, then Senior Parliamentary Secretary for Foreign Affairs and Culture, Community and Youth, gave a speech on 'Singapore in the Arctic' at the first Arctic Circle ever held in October 2013. Theoretically speaking, it is important to recognize that what Singapore could do and say about the Arctic back then was already significantly limited because of the hegemonic discourse installed by the Arctic states in society. Singapore did, though, have a choice whether to counter the discourse or not, but either way it could access to the Arctic only through the existing discourse(s). There is no way for any actor to talk about something without going through them (Sjölander, 2011, p. 19). As Tan wisely and calmly notes at the Arctic Circle:

As *the newest kid* on the block, we hope to continue to *learn* from our friends.

During our visits to the various Arctic regions such as Iqaluit, Nuuk and Rovaniemi, we *learned* about the key role *indigenous peoples* play in the development of the Arctic region. While it is easy for *outsiders* to see the Arctic as merely a barren, icy place with polar bears, the Arctic is actually a rich, diverse region full of tradition, culture, heritage, and life.

Singapore is *acutely* aware that developments in the Arctic will not only affect *Arctic states*. It also affects Singapore – a tropical country over 7,200km away from the Arctic (2013a, emphasis by the author).

These quotes include three nodal points of the Singaporean Arctic discourse, namely *knowledge* (learning), *indigenous people*, and the *A8*. Other nodal points are *climate change*, *shipping*, *migratory birds*, and *technology*, and they will be introduced one by one later.

For the country which locates near the equator and is believed to possess zero Arcticness, referring itself as a kid, who is eager to learn more about the Arctic from the well-recognized adults (A8 and indigenous people), is a crucial move so as to peacefully participate in the dominant discourse. Nevertheless, it is strategic at the same time on the ground that it leaves some possibility for Singapore to actually become a full-fledged Arctic state in the future when this leaning process has been completed. Kids do not have to be kids forever. This introduction of temporal and dynamic aspect of Arctic identity (Hansen, 2006, pp. 43-44) can overshadow its spatial and static component that Singapore can hardly acquire. Also, it implicitly signifies the Arctic as a space which can be studied and mastered by human beings.

In the following years, Singapore has continued its learning about the Arctic:

The last 12 months have been *a steep and enriching learning curve* for Singapore. I have seen a little more of the Arctic and met many *knowledgeable* people, who *know* the Arctic well and care deeply for the region. My visits and conversations have left me more convinced than ever of how precious the Arctic is, in all senses of the word, but also how



fragile. We *have learnt* much - thanks to the generosity of our friends, many of whom are here at this Assembly. We understand a little better how Singapore could contribute to the development objectives of Arctic forums like the Arctic Council and the Arctic Circle. *But there is much more to learn* (Tan, 2014, emphasis by the author).

Singapore is *still learning* when it comes to Arctic issues (Teo, 2015, emphasis by the author).

We are happy to *learn* from everyone, be it our longstanding friends like the *eight Arctic Council Member States*, or our newfound friends among the *indigenous peoples* (Tan, 2015a, emphasis by the author).

[W]e have hosted, and will continue to host Arctic events to raise *public awareness* of Arctic issues in Singapore and *Southeast Asia* (Tan, 2016a, emphasis by the author).

With the limited number of speeches, it is difficult to confirm whether Singapore has managed to become an ‘adult’ in Arctic affairs. Singapore, nonetheless, seems to have gained enough confidence and Arcticness to participate *naturally* in Arctic making since the usage of the verb ‘learn’ has much decreased, as time has proceeded, and it did not even use it in the three of the 2017 speeches. Moreover, recent talks slightly indicate the Singapore’s desire to be a leading Arctic power in the region of Southeast Asia in coming decades if not years (Tan, 2016a; Tan, 2017a; Tan, 2017b). Only future texts will be able to reveal a wider and more detailed picture on its intended learning curve.

Singapore is not only learning as a state, but also educating fellow citizens of what is really happening at the top of the world and make the Arctic come into being in their parts of the globe. On the occasion of ‘The Accessible Arctic’ a photo exhibition of the Canadian Arctic, Tan mentions:

In this part of the world, the Arctic is not as well understood as it should be, and this exhibition aims to redress that. This exhibition will make the Arctic more “accessible” and will widen Singaporeans’ perception of the Arctic (2013b).

He further states (2014), as the fruit of a visit by a Canadian Inuit storyteller to Singapore, that “Singaporeans of all ages learned about age old Inuit traditions”. It has appealed, throughout its texts, that these “thought-provoking exhibitions and events” (Tan, 2014) have inspired its own people and brought the Arctic discourse closer to their heart, which may ultimately reinforce the Singapore’s position as a future Arctic state.

The excerpts to this point well instruct that only the A8 and indigenous people are positioned as legitimate subjects in the Singapore’s Arctic understanding. It has happened as expected because other conceivable players such as NGOs, municipalities, and non-indigenous local people had already been effectively marginalized and silenced in the hegemonic discourse (Keskitalo, 2004), and hence Singapore has not had other means of describing the Arctic. This is what it means discourse works to narrow down the scope of thinkable objects, subjects, and their relations in a given situation (Neumann, 2008, p. 62).

Singapore unambiguously has accepted the dominant discourse by saying that “[i]n line with the Nuuk Criteria, Singapore recognises that the Arctic states and *their* indigenous peoples ... are crucial stakeholders in the region” (Tan, 2016b, emphasis by the author). The Nuuk Criteria is a guideline which hegemonizes the A8’s position further by strictly clarifying what observers can and cannot do in the AC. It was enacted in 2011 amid heightened global attention towards the Arctic (cf. Graczyk and Koivurova, 2014). The above Tan’s remark (‘their’), moreover, hints that indigenous people have a rather subordinate role and well controlled by the Arctic states although they are entitled the position of Permanent Participants in the AC. What distinguishes Singapore from other non-Arctic players such as China and Greenpeace is its significantly explicit statement that “we have no interest in any territorial or resource claims in the Arctic” (Tan, 2017b; see also Tan, 2013a; 2014). By showing absolute no ambition to derive the Arctic states of their prioritized seats, Singapore

has gained warm welcome and relatively smooth admission into the game of Arctic spatialization. There was not any reference made to the Arctic coastal states, i.e. the A5, in contrast to the A8.

The fourth nodal point is *climate change*. This is articulated to signify how closely the Arctic is connected environmentally to the rest of the globe, which is frequently brought by a variety of actors as a (semi-) counter discourse:

*Geographical distance* is not a factor when it comes to the global effects of climate change. The melting of the Arctic sea-ice can pose *a threat to our survival* (Tan, 2013a, emphasis by the author).

[T]he urgency of the need for global action to tackle climate change is more evident in the Arctic than in any other part of the world (Tan, 2015b).

Putting climate change as fundamental danger to the existence of a “small low-lying island state” (Tan, 2015b) creates an atmosphere that Singapore is acting out of necessity to responsibly protect its own inhabitants as well as global populations. To get involved in the Arctic is a must, not a choice for Singapore to stay alive. It is underlined throughout the texts that the fragile and beautiful Arctic environment is dramatically changing *right now* so that there appears a sense of urgency to pursue certain foreign policies towards the North. Moreover, the ongoing change has been treated as an indisputable fact. In the Singapore’s Arctic discourse, climate change signifies, among other things, global sea level rise *and* new opportunities for *shipping* across the Arctic, which is the fifth nodal point. In other words, a wide range of elements that climate change can possibly connote such as deforestation and extreme weather patterns are deliberately relegated to these two moments that are both oceanic in nature.

This is nothing but a reasonable logic if we think that Singapore is a maritime country that thrives as a central hub for global shipping and trying to exploit symbolically the sign ‘Arctic’ to reinforce or safeguard its identity and subject position in the world. As Kasiviswanathan Shanmugam, former Minister for Foreign Affairs, and Tony Tan, current President of Singapore, tell respectively:

Singapore successfully gained observer status in the Arctic Council. Our contribution as an observer will allow us to monitor first-hand important issues that will affect *our interests*, such as the environmental effects due to the development in the Arctic, impact of new shipping routes on *our position as a transshipment hub and freedom of navigation* (Shanmugam, 2014, emphasis by the author).

[T]he sea is a crucial lifeline. ...Climate change developments in the Arctic region have significant impact on rising sea levels and the growing commercial shipping in the Arctic. These represent both opportunities and challenges (Tan. T, 2015).

The Arctic is, above all, an ocean for Singapore, in spite of adopting the (semi-) counter discourse ‘Arctic as globalizing space’ from the environmental point of view. It is interesting because it somehow goes against the contemporary trend of Arctic expansion as a physical space from the North Pole to the Arctic Circle and further to 60°N parallel and returns to the point where it used to be. This is not to say that Singapore is openly declaring that the Arctic is contracting. Rather, it means that this is what the country is talking about when it talks about the Arctic. Singapore is articulating and constructing the Arctic space in order to perform its identity as a maritime state in it, which simultaneously results in reinforcing its identity which it intends to project (Ó Tuathail and Agnew, 1992, pp. 192-194; Hansen, 2006, pp. 20-25). Designating the Arctic as an ocean opens up different possibilities as well as limitations than doing otherwise.

How then can Singapore connect more firmly the two dots which are far-detached: the Arctic

and its own geographical location near the equator, if the Arctic does not expand towards the South? The key is *migratory birds* that are the sixth nodal point. The Arctic migratory birds travel from the North and stop at Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve in Singapore for feeding and roosting every winter. It certainly happens independently of our will and no matter what we say, but, as Laclau and Mouffe argue (2001, p. 108), the connection becomes arbitrary when it is purposefully related to other moments such as knowledge and climate change in discourses to have specific meanings and functions, for example to promote Singapore's Arcticness *politically*. As Sam Tan, current Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office and Ministry of Manpower, comments at the Arctic Migratory Birds Initiative Workshop which was convened for the first time in Southeast Asia as one of AC's meetings in 2017:

In fact, Sungei Buloh annually enjoys "winter holiday visits" by more than 2,000 Arctic migratory birds ... Our National Parks Board (NParks) monitors these bird populations and shares this information with the Arctic Council's Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF) Working Group. In this way, even a country as geographically distant from the Arctic as Singapore can contribute to Arctic research and to the work of the Arctic Council in which we have been an observer since 2013. Co-hosting this workshop is a part of our contributions as an Arctic Council observer state (2017a).

In addition to the above context, birds are articulated almost in all other speeches to signify either the surprising but inextricable link between the Arctic and Singapore or/and the fact that the country possesses adequate knowledge and *technology*, seventh and last nodal point, to contribute for the conservation of rare Arctic species and the benefit of the A8 and indigenous people. That migratory birds are monitorable and controllable by human beings tacitly suggests, in a larger perspective, that both negative and positive consequences of climate change in the Arctic can be regulated and exploited by gaining more knowledge and advancing today's technologies.

Indigenous populations are too put in a similar position as birds and invited every year to Singapore for studying “skills and expertise on a range of areas under [its] technical assistance programme” (Tan, 2013b) in order for them to be able to adapt to rapid changes occurring in the Arctic. While the importance and invaluableness of local cultures and traditional knowledge of northern people are not denied in the Singapore’s Arctic discourse, they themselves are not certainly sufficient for them to survive and, therefore, have to be matched with contemporary know-how that Singapore are so willing to offer. “In fact, tradition partners well with modernism”, as Tan (2013a) loudly claims. This reflects, at it is, the asymmetrical relationship between the A8 and indigenous people which assume a somewhat subordinate role in the hegemonic discourse. Furthermore, their annual study visit, besides Arctic related conferences, exhibitions, and events, is another articulation to attest Singapore’s ever growing Arctiness to become an Arctic state.

Singapore’s sophisticated knowledge and technology, particularly ocean-related ones such as icebreakers and port operation & management, are being offered also for the Arctic states, which appears to be an eventual aim for the country to come all the way to the North (Bennett, 2016b, pp. 32-33; Gang, 2016, pp. 214-215). “We believe Singapore is *in a position to assist* in the development of maritime infrastructure *to facilitate safe shipping* in the region” (Tan, 2016b, emphasis by the author). This position as a giver to not a taker from the Arctic is something new among non-Arctic states, as others like energy starved China and Japan are perceived as only self-interested for resource exploitation (Bennett, 2013). This is not to say that Singapore is just benevolently volunteering. They, of course, can benefit enormously by selling its know-how and products to customers who are articulated as being in need.

The two nodal points ‘climate change’ and ‘shipping’ are deliberately glued in the discourse to

envisage and achieve a particular Arctic future and responsibility associated with it:

[C]hanges in the Arctic will *invariably* change the future of maritime transport. This is an issue of importance to Singapore as *a maritime nation*. *As the Arctic sea routes open*, care will *have to be* taken to ensure the survival of the vulnerable marine ecosystem. Infrastructure will also *have to be* further developed to ensure safe shipping in the region (Teo, 2015, emphasis by the author).

[A] warmer Arctic will *undoubtedly* present new economic possibilities. In particular, the opening of new Arctic water channels, such as the Northern Sea Route, will significantly reduce travel time between Asia and Europe (Tan, 2016b, emphasis by the author).

Attaching adverbs like ‘invariably’ and ‘undoubtedly’ effectively evacuates another imaginable future that is *not* to open/use the Arctic shipping routes even when global warming accelerates, and Arctic ice is gone. The latter case sounds more plausible and less contradicting when bearing in mind the fragility and preciousness of the Arctic environment which Singapore itself has emphasized through its own texts. This is, however, no longer an option in the discourse since taking full advantage of the shorter paths is told as a premise on which ‘care’ must be taken to minimize its detrimental impact on the environment and ‘infrastructure’ must be further built to maximize its economic potential. Needless to say, Singaporean ‘knowledge’ and ‘technology’ are signified as indispensable assets for ‘indigenous people’ as well as for the ‘A8’ towards that end. The particular future has come into being instead of others when Singapore has articulated in the discourse that climate change directly and apolitically will lead to more shipping in the Arctic.

To sum up, Singapore has constructed its Arctic discourse around the seven nodal points: ‘knowledge’, ‘indigenous people’, ‘A8’, ‘climate change’, ‘shipping’, ‘migratory birds’, and ‘technology’. The unique character is its deliberate and notable focus on the oceanic aspect of the Arctic to project its identity as a maritime state. Although engaging with the (semi-)

counter discourse ‘globalizing Arctic’ in terms of environment, Singapore has obediently accepted the hegemonic discourse and taken a position of non-Arctic states which has been constructed as a pure provider of its refined maritime expertise on account of the A8 and indigenous people to make the most of the emerging/ed shipping routes in the area. That being said, Singapore has still left some chances to become an Arctic state in the future by strategically constructing its Arcticness in the form of knowledge accumulation (learning) which is inherently temporal and dynamic. Migratory birds which visit Singapore every winter are also signified to produce country’s Arcticness. Major features of the discourse are further summarized in the Table 2 in the next section for contrast and comparison.

#### 5.4. Discussion: Comparison and Contrast

The result of my analysis, which is summarized in the Table 2 on the next page, shows that the Arctic discourses and Arcticness of Finland, Russia, and Singapore have been constructed and structured considerably differently. Even though discourses share similar nodal points and moments, they are placed to signify different things at different levels in varying degree of significance, which results in offering diverse images of what and where the Arctic is. The concept of ‘floating signifier’ becomes important here. As has already been introduced, floating signifiers are “the signs that different discourses struggle to invest with meaning in their own particular way” (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002, p. 28). Therefore, to discover them is a good way to pinpoint the focal point of their discursive struggles to hegemonize their own Arctics. If there were no floating signifiers, the three Arctics would resemble each other more.

The first example of floating signifiers identified from my analysis is ‘AC’. Finland and Russia apparently have different expectation concerning roles the AC should take. Although it works as the nodal point in both discourses, there appears to be two different councils due to



Table 2: Arctic discourses and Arcticness of Finland, Russia, and Singapore

	Russia	Finland	Singapore
Nodal points	Economy Peacefulness A5 AC Regionalness	Technology Nordic EU Sustainable development AC Globalness	Knowledge Indigenous people A8 Climate change Shipping Migratory birds Technology
Strong moments	Natural resource Shipping Cooperation International law	Economy Society Environment UN Cooperation	Global sea level rise
Notable weak moments	Environment Indigenous people	International law Security Military	
Notable elements	Military Conflict Globalness Non-indigenous locals	Regionalness Petsamo	A5 Non-indigenous locals
Definition of the Arctic	Ocean or above 66°N	above 60°N	Ocean
Major sources of Arcticness	Geography	Geography History Technology	Knowledge Migratory birds
Interaction with counter discourses	Globalizing Arctic (against) Common heritage of mankind (against)	Globalizing Arctic (for) Common heritage of mankind (for, High Seas around the North Pole)	Globalizing Arctic (for, only environmentally)

other nodal points which are connected to it, namely 'globalness' and 'regionalness'. Finland signifies it as a global forum which needs to be open to outside actors and ready to become a full-fledged international organization while it is expected to be a regional and shielded entity by Russia. Thus, there has been an ongoing battle to fill the sign 'AC', and this is important to triumph because how the AC, central subject in the region, is discursively represented has an enormous impact on how the Arctic should be governed and look like. It is a little unexpected that Singapore has selected the A8, instead of the AC, as the nodal point if we consider the situation that the county has its observer status. I suggest that Singapore has chosen so because the Nuuk Criteria of the AC severely limits what observer countries can say and do with(in) it. The Arctic would be therefore more accessible for Singapore through practicing diplomacy bilaterally with individual Arctic states (A8) rather than multilaterally with the AC.

The second example of floating signifiers is 'economy'. Here it is necessary to see its relation with and distance from the sign 'environment' to determine to what extent each Arctic prioritizes economic development over environmental protection. In the Russian case, the environment is virtually neglected so as to exploit the Arctic to the maximum extent possible. As such, the distance is profoundly wide, which makes the discourse exploitative. In the Finnish Arctic, the distance is none, and its approach is more balanced, as 'economy' and 'environment' are signified equally under the nodal point 'sustainable development'. Likewise, they have equivalent status in the Singaporean Arctic, as 'shipping' and 'climate change', representatives of the economy and environment, are both nodal points of the discourse. It is the unique feature of Singapore's articulation that the empty signifier 'Arctic' goes straightforwardly to signify 'shipping' and 'climate change' without passing through larger signs such as 'economy' and 'environment'. In a way, it is issue-wise much more focused than other discourses.

What the economy signifies also differs between the three countries. As I mentioned above, it is just shipping for Singapore. Russia adds natural resources (oil and gas) to it. Finland further complements them with land-related opportunities, for example mining, railways, and tourism in order to underscore that the Arctic is not confined to the ocean. What the Arctic stands for economically again decisively affects how people around the world perceive the space called Arctic. This is demonstrated by the fact that the disagreement over the sign 'economy' is reflected as it is in their discrepancy in where the border should be drawn to demarcate the Arctic from elsewhere. That being said, we should not miss the point that the economy is NOT an element in none of the examined discourses. In other words, profiting economically from the Arctic is taken as a precondition, and the three states have articulated to naturalize it. One particular mode of representation has hence been adapted, which delimits "what is thought of as the 'natural thing' to do" therein (Neumann, 2008, p. 62), and I suppose that this is something to which Greenpeace has been sharply opposing. In order to vanquish the Arctic economically without destroying its environment, Finland and Singapore signify their technology and/or knowledge as the silver bullet. This does not seem to be a matter of concern for Russia, as the economy is the top priority.

There are three more things which they all have in common. Firstly, all three countries take multiple subject positions in writing of the Arctic space(s). This is most evident in the case of Finland which identifies itself with a European, Nordic, and an Arctic state when articulating the Arctic. While Russia takes the position of an Arctic and Arctic coastal state, Singapore constructs itself as a non-Arctic and maritime country. This finding reconfirms the earlier theoretical discussion: the construction of space and identity are mutually constitutive. Each country has articulated the Arctic in such a manner that their identities (e.g. a maritime state), can be projected, and these discursive practices and constructed spaces (e.g. Arctic as the ocean) in return reify these identities that they cast. At this point, it might be wondered why

Russia has behaved remarkably peacefully and cooperatively in the Arctic, and not militarily and aggressively as has allegedly been the case elsewhere such as Syria and Ukraine. These two contradictory ways of conducts cannot be explained if we assume that subjects possess a priori established and permanently fixed identities. But it becomes fully conceivable if we think that Russia is taking several subject positions at the same time. In the Arctic, we are seeing Russia as an Arctic state whose character is firmly tied to such nodal points and moments as ‘peacefulness’, ‘cooperation’, and ‘AC’ in the today’s Arctic discourse.

Secondly, indigenous people have agency, though to varying degrees of strength, in all of their discourses. It is the weakest in the Russian Arctic since the sign ‘indigenous people’ situates rather independently as a fairly weak moment in the discourse. In terms of the Finnish North, indigenous populations are just one of many subjects (e.g. international organizations and private companies) which are signified by the moment ‘society’, so it is not that strong either. It is the strongest in the case of Singapore, as the A8 and indigenous people are the two major subjects and nodal points of its Arctic construction. This is an interesting finding that the country whose distance from the Arctic is the farthest stresses the indigenous people’s agency the most. I argue that Singapore does so not because it genuinely cares about indigenous people, but because this has been the only readily available description of the Arctic provided by the hegemonic discourse in society on which Canada has had powerful influence. My claim is also supported by the fact that indigenous people are articulated by Singapore as dependents of the A8’s and its modern technology and knowledge that the country is so willing to sell.

Thirdly, the counter discourse ‘Arctic should be governed by people who live there including non-indigenous populations’ (please see p. 45) has not been embraced in any of their Arctic articulations. Non-indigenous locals, which account for about 90% of Arctic population (if it

is defined as the place above the Arctic Circle), are entirely overlooked by both Russia and Singapore. This has happened as anticipated because Canada's hegemonic understanding of the Arctic has relegated non-indigenous locals to the same category of indigenous people, and as a result they are not entitled any subject position in the dominant discourse (Keskitalo, 2004). This is slightly different in the case of Finland, as they are indeed signified by the moment 'society'. However, it is still far from the desirable situation (claimed by this counter discourse) that Arctic locals should be the ones who have the strongest say in and decide for the region. Many other entities are also given subject positions in the Finnish Arctic, which makes their agency rather small and limited. From this, we can expect with a high degree of certainty that the Arctic space will continue to be written by states and others rather than local populations for the time being.

Next, I would like to present unique signs which have provided each discourse some added color. I argue that they are 'A5' (Russia), 'military' and 'security' (Finland), and 'migratory birds' (Singapore). The nodal point 'A5' manifests fairly explicitly the Russia's desire to crystallize this subject position and distinguish itself (or themselves) from the Arctic non-coastal states. Also, it shows well how Russia wants to define the Arctic and its negative attitude towards region's globalization. Although still being weak, Finland has articulated the two moments 'military' and 'security' even before the crisis in Ukraine in its discourse. This is remarkable because they are both elements in the hegemonic storyline. The reason for this, as I have already claimed in the earlier section, seems to be that Finland can have much more possibilities to customize the Arctic (e.g. Europeanization, Nordicization, and globalization) by maintaining that the region is *not yet* managed perfectly and exceptionally peacefully by the A5/A8. The nodal point 'migratory birds' is adeptly and uniquely articulated by Singapore to build a magical bridge between it and the Arctic. The bird is, intriguingly, the only animal which has been extensively signified in the texts I have examined. For example, polar bears,

iconic figure of the Arctic, are not uttered by any country.

In regard to the source of Arcticness, considerable divergence can be observed between the three countries. For Russia, Arcticness means something which emanates from countries' geographical locations. Therefore, it is fully *spatially* constructed, and a rigid boundary is drawn. If states have the territory in the Arctic, they can be identified as the Arctic states. If not, they cannot be. This is reasonable construction because it naturally makes Russia, which owns the longest Arctic coastline, a state full of Arcticness. At the other end of the spectrum, Singapore articulates Arcticness on the basis of knowledge about the region. As its learning curve has shown, Singapore is increasing its Arcticness by gaining more and more knowledge about the Arctic. Thus, it is entirely *temporarily* structured. It can also be said that Singapore as a future Arctic state (adult) is being constituted against the temporal 'Other' of the past (kid) that has been ignorant of the North. Moreover, migratory birds add a final touch on its Arcticness. Finland situates somewhere in the middle of these two patterns, and its Arcticness is articulated to come from the three sources: geography (60°N parallel), history (Adolf Nordenskjöld), and technology (e.g. icebreaker). As such, it is structured in both spatial and temporal fashions. It appears to be necessary for Finland to combine all the sources because it lacks direct access to the Arctic Ocean and didn't traditionally even imagine that its own territory belonged to the Arctic (Keskitalo, 2004, pp. 42 & 145-147). The contrast between the three cases suggests that more central subject position occupied becomes, less flexible its source of Arcticness would be. Every country in the world has a chance to become an Arctic state if Arcticness can entirely be embellished with its knowledge about the region.

To conclude the discussion and the whole chapter, I want to remind the core assumption of this thesis: there does not exist any single, but many Arctics. And, I believe that my discourse analysis has meticulously shown the three dissimilar Arctics and Arcticness articulated by

Finland, Russia, and Singapore. They have come into existence in order for each country to sponsor their specific interests and identities. However, this is not to deny that they still share several key aspects, and the hegemonic discourse has equally affected them. It is also important to acknowledge that these individual discourses and Arctics in return impact on the dominant discourse through which people around the globe access the place named as 'Arctic'. Only time will exactly tell what and whose Arctic will hegemonize the social in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and beyond.

## 6. CONCLUSION

This thesis has been a journey *not* to seek for the essence of the Arctic and Arcticness, *but* to identify the process of how Finland, Russia, and Singapore have articulated, constructed, and essentialized a certain Arctic and Arcticness to become primary subjects therein. With the help of poststructuralist discourse theory and analysis, a total of 74 ‘texts’ have been deconstructed to elucidate how the empty signifier and space called ‘Arctic’ have been filled and written by the three states in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The analyzed ‘texts’ were mostly political speeches of authoritative figures at globally acknowledged premises such as the AC, the Arctic Circle, and the Arctic Frontiers, just to name a few. In this concluding chapter, I will first summarize the major findings of my discourse analysis and then discuss how the result can potentially be applied by scholars, policymakers, and the general public. Lastly, the possible future research will be explored by taking the limitation of this study into account.

Russia, which occupies the subject position ‘A5’ (Arctic coastal state), constructs its Arctic discourse around the five nodal points: ‘economy’, ‘peacefulness’, ‘A5’, ‘AC’, and ‘regionalness’. Other influential moments are ‘natural resource’, ‘shipping’, ‘cooperation’, and ‘international law’. The Arctic is articulated as the place whose economic opportunities *must be* exploited and whose *exceptional* peacefulness should be respected. The primary subjects in the Russian Arctic are the A5 and the AC. However, the country has shown moderately different attitude towards the A5 and the A3 (Arctic non-coastal states) and its desire to privilege the former. It rejects to globalize the region and accept new players thereto, as it is believed to be already spotlessly maintained in the current governance. By being affected by the hegemonic discourse, the sings ‘environment’ and ‘indigenous people’ are still articulated in the discourse, but fairly weakly. For Russia, it itself is undoubtedly an Arctic country because of its geographical location, i.e. extended Arctic coastline. Other sources of



Arcticness have not been uttered, so it is entirely *spatially* structured, and the clear boundary is marked (either 66°N parallel or Arctic Ocean) between the Arctic and elsewhere so as to be explicit in terms of who are entitled to have a decisive say in the region.

Finland, which takes the subject position 'A8', naturalizes its Arctic on the basis of six nodal points: 'technology', 'Nordic', 'EU', 'sustainable development', 'AC', and 'globalness', and five moments: 'economy', 'society', 'environment', 'UN', and 'cooperation'. An enormous number of signs (both objects and subjects) signified in the discourse is worth noting. This miscellaneousness and multidimensionality appear to be the Finnish game plan to let 'Arctic' signify as many things as possible in order to assert and develop its identity in many angles, for example Europeaness and Nordicness, in the constructed space called Arctic. The Finnish Arctic is no longer a region, but globalized arena in which not only indigenous people and the A8, but also international organizations, business enterprises, and NGOs are entitled subject positions. Although economic opportunities are articulated as something that surely cannot be missed, the country's approach towards the Arctic is reasonably balanced, as 'environment' and 'society' are also signified at the equal level as 'economy'. Furthermore, the so-called 'Arctic paradox' has been acknowledged. The Arctic is an *ordinarily* peaceful zone for Finland, and it has demonstrated its willingness to take the initiative in deepening this cooperation further through the context of the Nordic, EU, AC, and UN. According to the texts, Finland is *naturally* an Arctic state because of its geographical whereabouts (above 60°N parallel), history (Adolf Nordenskjöld), and technology (e.g. icebreaker). As such, its Arcticness is structured in both spatial and temporal manners. The facts that the Arctic was formerly not a familiar notion for Finland and that it once shortly had access to the Arctic Ocean with the region called Petsamo have been neglected altogether in the discourse.

Singapore, which is given the subject position 'non-Arctic state', essentializes its Arctic by

articulating the seven nodal points, namely ‘knowledge’, ‘indigenous people’, ‘A8’, ‘climate change’, ‘shipping’, ‘migratory birds’, and ‘technology’. With the obedient acceptance of the hegemonic discourse, Singapore has metaphorized itself as a kid who is eager to learn about the Arctic from the adults that are the A8 and indigenous populations. Other actors such as non-indigenous locals have been completely overlooked in the Singaporean Arctic, as in the dominant one. Its Arcticness, which is *temporarily* constructed in terms of knowledge accumulation, has supposedly increased over the past several years. If this learning continues successfully, Singapore may become an Arctic state (adult) mirrored against the temporal ‘Other’ of the past (kid) in the future. Additionally, migratory birds, which visit the country every winter from the North, are cleverly signified to supply extra Arcticness. The Arctic is, first and foremost, an ocean for Singapore as a maritime state. This ocean is believed to be *invariably* opening up for shipping because of climate change, and for this reason care and infrastructure *must be* taken and developed in the Arctic. Singapore’s maritime knowledge and technology appear to be the silver bullet for the world to master the Arctic economically and environmentally at the same time. The number of moments signified in the discourse is relatively small, which makes Singaporean Arctic focused in terms of objects and subjects.

The three cases above manifest that Finland, Russia, and Singapore have crystallized the three certainly distinctive Arctics and Arcticness in such ways as to suit to their specific needs and identities. Both the hegemonic and counter discourses have, although to different extents and directions, had impact on individual Arctic makings of the three states. My analysis reconfirms some theoretically important points. Firstly, constructed totality is never to be finalized because each being articulates different sings in different times, places, and contexts. Hence, political struggles to define the essence of the Arctic will most likely to be there as far as speaking actors exist in the world. Secondly, discourse limits the width of what can be said about and done towards objects and subjects of the world. The three totalities have worked to

simplify the space called ‘Arctic’ by adopting particular modes of representation over another. Whenever empty signifiers are produced and filled, they exclude something, but this is what makes it possible for the social and Arctic to represent themselves towards human beings in the perceivable way, as Laclau (2007, p. 44) argues. Thirdly, space and identity makings are inextricably intertwined, as has been evident from the Arctic customizations of the three states. There cannot be Arctic states without constructing the very Arctic, and vice versa.

The findings of this thesis can be applied by various actors for different motives. For instance, scholars and politicians may utilize these (deconstructed) discourses to *reasonably* presume what kind of Arctic policies Finland, Russia, and Singapore may pursue in the coming years. This is NOT to claim that the discourses will cause these actions. Nonetheless, they at least narrow down the range of what the three states can *naturally* say and do in regard to the Arctic. Aberrant practices that go far beyond their discourses are thus highly unlikely. Looking from an opposite angle, the study’s result may also help the general public and others to think outside the box (discourse) and to reconstruct different Arctics if necessary in their minds. It would be nearly impossible to do so without my study or other similar works exactly because of installed discourses in society which make people think in certain naturalized ways. Thus, the most important value of this thesis, I believe, is that it gives readers a critical gaze and knowledge to see what the Arctic is/has been really all about.

This research can potentially be extended in multiple directions. For instance, the future articulation of the three states can be compared with the findings here in order to explore possible (un)changes. A good starting point could be Finland, as it is expected to be active in Arctic making as the next chair of the AC from May 2017. It should be reminded, before closing our journey, that states are not the only actors in world politics to participate in Arctic construction. It would be invaluable and necessary to examine different kinds of subjects, on

which this thesis could not turn a spotlight, so that we can acquire a wider and more complete picture of political struggles to essentialize the space called ‘Arctic’. Likewise, identifying how the discourses at the official level have been performed and reproduced in the context of everyday life in Finland, Russia, and Singapore would be an essential topic. I strongly believe that the theoretical, methodological, and scientific approach demonstrated in this study will be invaluablely helpful for all of the above purposes as well as for studying other topical issues in world politics. Thusly, I will and wish to be always a part of Arctic future(s) with this thesis.

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